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HEAVY METAL™

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The adult illustrated fantasy magazine

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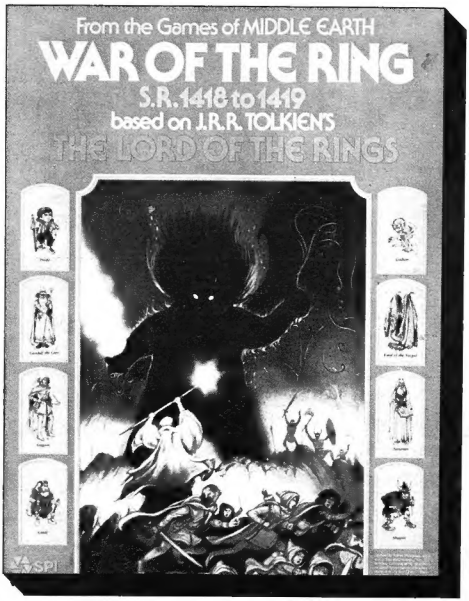
WAR OF THE RING

based on J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S

THE LORD OF THE RINGS



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...SUBSEQUENTLY...

First, the good news.

In deepest Germany, we find a city called Frankfurt, which the Huns kidnapped from the Belgians thousands of years ago, and which the Belgians won't take back. To this town went the publisher of *Heavy Metal* recently, to attend a book fair, to which, cunningly disguised as a book, he gained admittance. From Frankfurt he returned, with a mild case of schnitzel-breath and a portmanteau full of weirdness. Within the latter are many science-fiction-fantasy pages from French magazine, *Pilote,* all of it every bit as strange as the stuff from *Metal Hurlant* we've been using here...and a new *Barbarella* book, detailing the furthur adventures of the Queen of the Cosmos...and a truly freaky Druillet illuminated manuscript called "Urm"... all of which we will have the honor to present to you in upcoming issues of *HM.* This is the good news to those of us who put together and/or read the magazine.

But it is—or will be taken as—bad news by the local talent. All kinds of unorthodox, nonscheduled, semiprofessional, sensational, or stupid work in the s/f fantasy comic art hallucination field is indeed being executed by red-blooded American boys and girls. Many of these works are lugged in, mailed in, phoned in, or magically materialize in this office. Some of it we have used and will use. But at a meeting of the editorial board I held with myself in the shower recently, it was decided that *HM* will not attempt to do everything at once, and will continue to emphasize European, especially French, material contrary to the wishes of such American hewers of wood nymphs and drawers of water babies as would like to appear here, and feel that our usual three to one ratio is downright unpatriotic.

Tough.

P.S. The publisher sez advise potential contributors to try Frankfurt. It seems they're crazy for American stuff over there....

Plug: The story "A Rose for Ecclesiastes," which adorns our pages this month, is one of a trio of Roger Zelazny classics that have been illustrated by Gray Morrow, all three soon to be released in book form by Baronet. Mr. Morrow's own eight part epic swashbuckler, "Orion," will appear in the March *Heavy Metal.* We told Gray we would be starting it last month, and he met his deadline. Let that be a lesson to him.

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ULYSSES

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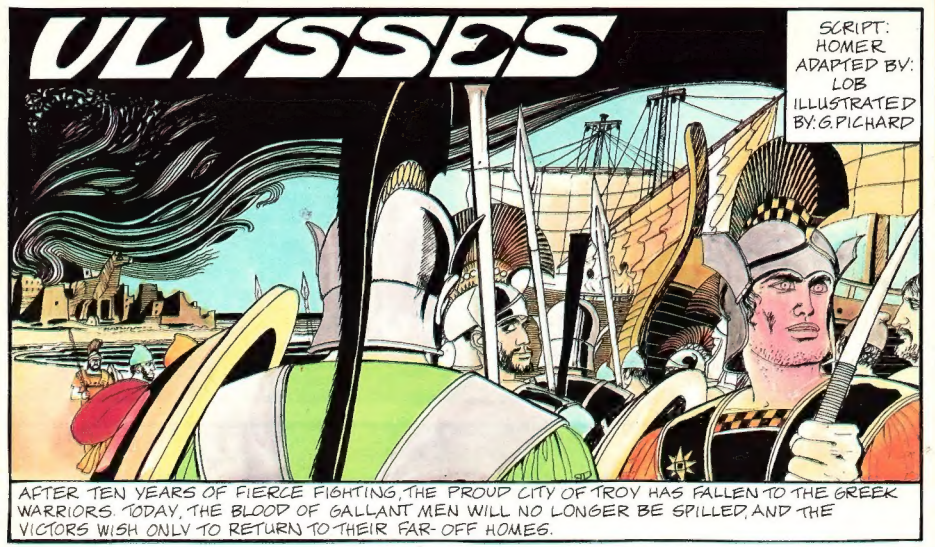
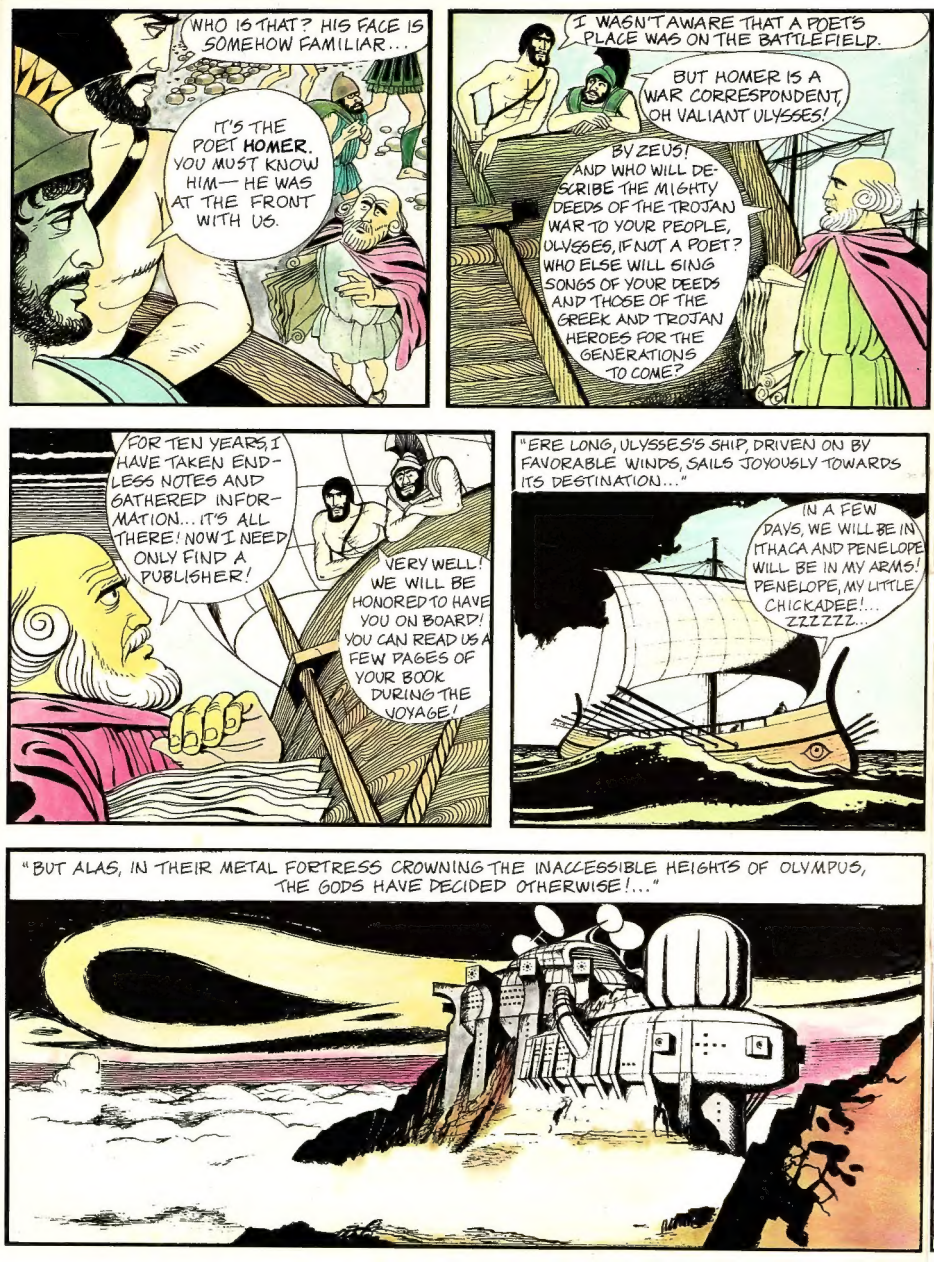
ADAPTED BY: LOB
ILLUSTRATED BY: G. PICHARD

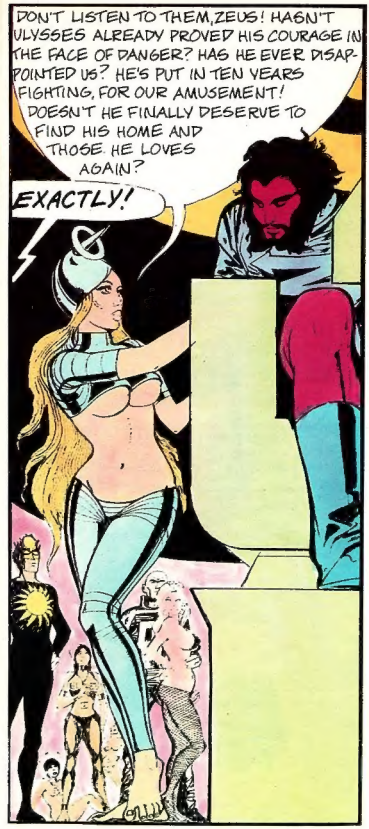


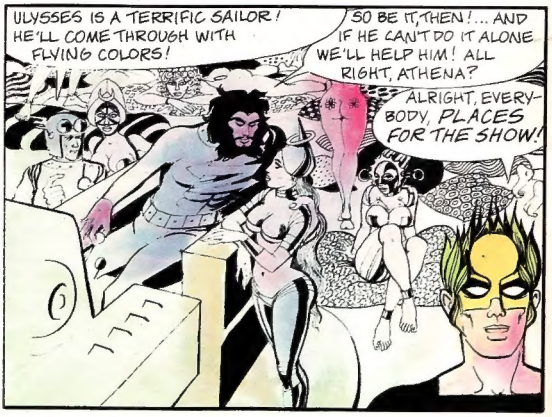
AFTER TEN YEARS OF FIERCE FIGHTING, THE PROUD CITY OF TROY HAS FALLEN TO THE GREEK WARRIORS. TODAY, THE BLOOD OF GALLANT MEN WILL NO LONGER BE SPILLED, AND THE VICTORS WISH ONLY TO RETURN TO THEIR FAR-OFF HOMES.

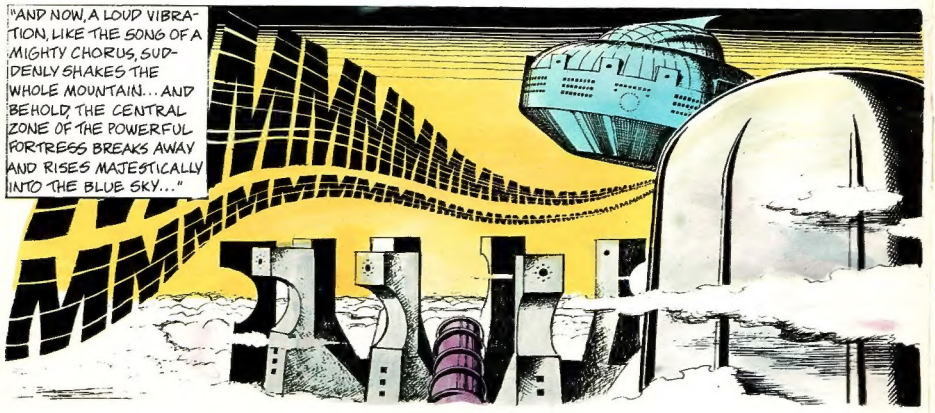
AMONG THEM IS THE CRAFTY ULYSSES, A WARRIOR'S WARRIOR, WHO PREPARES TO DEPART FOR ITHACA, HIS NATIVE ISLE, WHERE HIS FAITHFUL WIFE, PENELOPE, AWAITS HIM...
PENELOPE, MY BELOVED, MY DOVE... HOW I LONG TO SEE YOU AGAIN...


WHO IS THAT? HIS FACE IS SOMEHOW FAMILIAR...
IT'S THE POET HOMER. YOU MUST KNOW HIM— HE WAS AT THE FRONT WITH US.
I WASN'T AWARE THAT A POET'S PLACE WAS ON THE BATTLEFIELD.
BUT HOMER IS A WAR CORRESPONDENT, OH VALIANT ULYSSES!
BY ZEUS! AND WHO WILL DESCRIBE THE MIGHTY DEEDS OF THE TROJAN WAR TO YOUR PEOPLE, ULYSSES, IF NOT A POET? WHO ELSE WILL SING SONGS OF YOUR DEEDS AND THOSE OF THE GREEK AND TROJAN HEROES FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME?
FOR TEN YEARS, I HAVE TAKEN ENDLESS NOTES AND GATHERED INFORMATION... IT'S ALL THERE! NOW I NEED ONLY FIND A PUBLISHER!
VERY WELL! WE WILL BE HONORED TO HAVE YOU ON BOARD! YOU CAN READ US A FEW PAGES OF YOUR BOOK DURING THE VOYAGE!
"ERE LONG, ULYSSES'S SHIP, DRIVEN ON BY FAVORABLE WINDS, SAILS JOYOUSLY TOWARDS ITS DESTINATION..."
IN A FEW DAYS, WE WILL BE IN ITHACA AND PENELOPE WILL BE IN MY ARMS! PENELOPE, MY LITTLE CHICKADEE!... ZZZZZZ...
"BUT ALAS, IN THEIR METAL FORTRESS CROWNING THE INACCESSIBLE HEIGHTS OF OLYMPUS, THE GODS HAVE DECIDED OTHERWISE!..."

IT'S HERE THAT THEY DIRECTLY OBSERVE MORTALS THROUGH A TELECTRONOSCOPE.
COME ON, ZEUS, HAVEN'T YOU ANYTHING BETTER TO SHOW US THAN A MEDIUM CLOSE-UP OF ULYSSES PINING AWAY FOR HIS WIFE?
TOO BAD THE WAR'S OVER! IT WAS SOME SHOW!
WE'RE NOT GOING TO LET ULYSSES GET BACK TO ITHACA WITHOUT AN ADVENTURE, ARE WE?
SURE! THIS WAY THE VALIANT ULYSSES WILL FIND PENELOPE AGAIN... THEY WILL LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER, AND HAVE LOTS OF CHILDREN! HO-HUM!
ALRIGHT! WHAT ELSE DO YOU SUGGEST?
MMMM... A STORM, FOR OPENERS?
A CRASH OF THUNDER IN A CLEAR SKY!
UNCHAIN THE ELEMENTS!
RIGHT ON! SOMETHING REALLY SPECTACULAR!






"AND NOW, A LOUD VIBRATION, LIKE THE SONG OF A MIGHTY CHORUS, SUDDENLY SHAKES THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN... AND BEHOLD, THE CENTRAL ZONE OF THE POWERFUL FORTRESS BREAKS AWAY AND RISES MAJESTICALLY INTO THE BLUE SKY..."
MMMM

"THE VESSEL OF THE GODS NOW SLIPS ITS MOORINGS AND DRIFTS ACROSS THE HEAVENS..."

"...AND SEE HOW THE HEAVY BLACK CLOUDS GATHER ABOVE ULYSSES'S SHIP!..."

WE'RE GOING TO BE OVERTAKEN BY A REAL SQUALL!

WHAT CHANGEABLE WEATHER! THE SKY WAS SO CLEAR JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO!...

"IT IS THE WORK OF ZEUS, COLLECTOR OF CLOUDS, MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS, WHO RIGHT NOW IS PREPARING TO UNLEASH FLOODS OF ENERGY UPON THE EARTH!..."

CRACKLE!

CRACKLE!

ROAR! RUMBLE! ROAR!

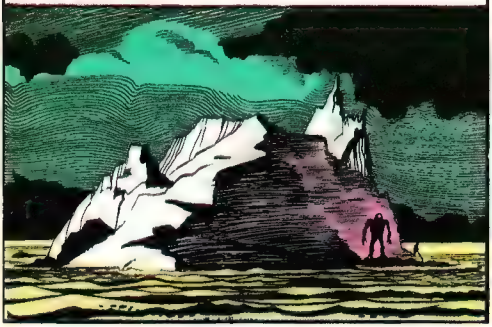
SCHAZAM

ZEUS'S FIRE!

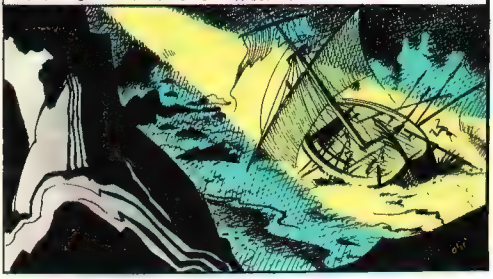
VEER ABOUT!

CAPTAIN! THE WIND HAS TORN THE SAILS!
VRAAA!
THE SHIP IS LISTING BADLY!
HAUL DOWN THE SAILS! ALL HANDS TO THE OARS! THE STRAITS OF APHRODITE ARE NEARBY! WE MUST REACH THEM, COME WHAT MAY!
YOU TOO, HOMER, TO THE OARS! I NEED EVERY MAN!
ANYTHING YOU SAY, ULYSSES! JUST LET ME TUCK THIS PRECIOUS MANUSCRIPT INSIDE MY CLOTHES... IT'S THE ONLY COPY I HAVE, AND I DON'T WANT TO SEE THE PAGES SCATTERED ON THE WIND...
AGAIN AND AGAIN, ULYSSES TRIED TO REACH THE STRAITS, BUT AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE ELEMENTS LEAGUED AGAINST HIM, THRUST HIM BACK!
IT'S USELESS TO PERSIST. WE SHALL NEVER REACH APHRODITE'S STRAIT NOW...
AFTER MANY HOURS, THE FURY OF THE WAVES AT LAST SUBSIDED AND THE SKY BEGAN TO CLEAR... BUT AN IMPLACABLE WIND CONTINUED TO BLOW, SWEEPING ULYSSES AND HIS BRAVE CREW FAR FROM SHORE.
AT LAST! THE WORST IS OVER!
THE GODS WILLING... FOR THIS EVIL WIND IS CARRYING US TOWARD THE LAND OF THE LOTUS EATERS!...
THE LAND OF THE LOTUS EATERS? DON'T THEY CALL IT THE LAND OF TERROR?
YES... FOR THEY SAY THAT THOSE WHO VENTURE THERE NEVER RETURN...
ZEUS! DON'T FORGET YOUR PROMISE!... DON'T LET THEM ENTER THE FORBIDDEN LAND!
THEY WON'T GET THAT FAR! HA HA! BECAUSE I'M SENDING THEM UP AGAINST THE SENTINEL!

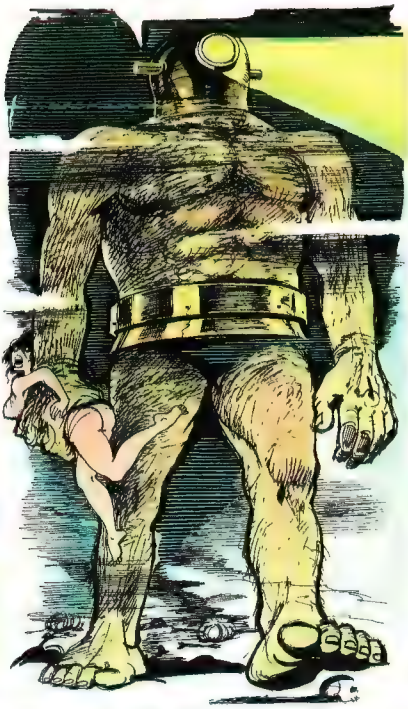
FAR AWAY FROM LANDS WHERE MEN LIVE, ON THE EDGES OF THE FORBIDDEN WORLD, IS AN ISLAND INHABITED BY A GIGANTIC, NIGHTMARISH FIGURE: THE SENTINEL...

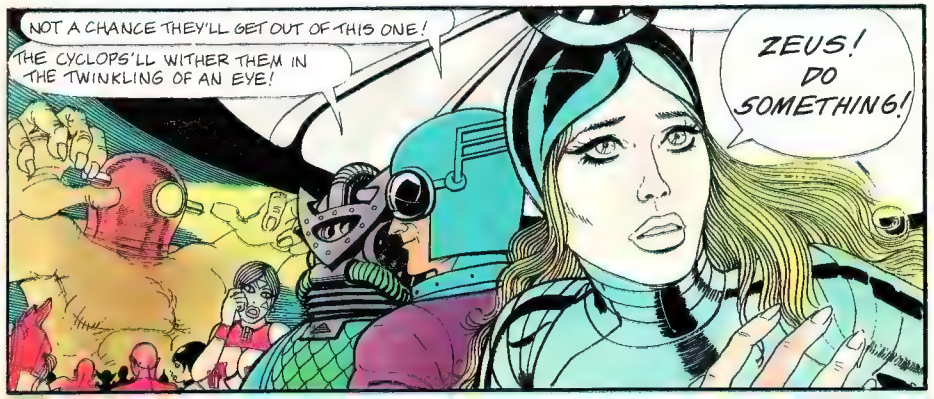


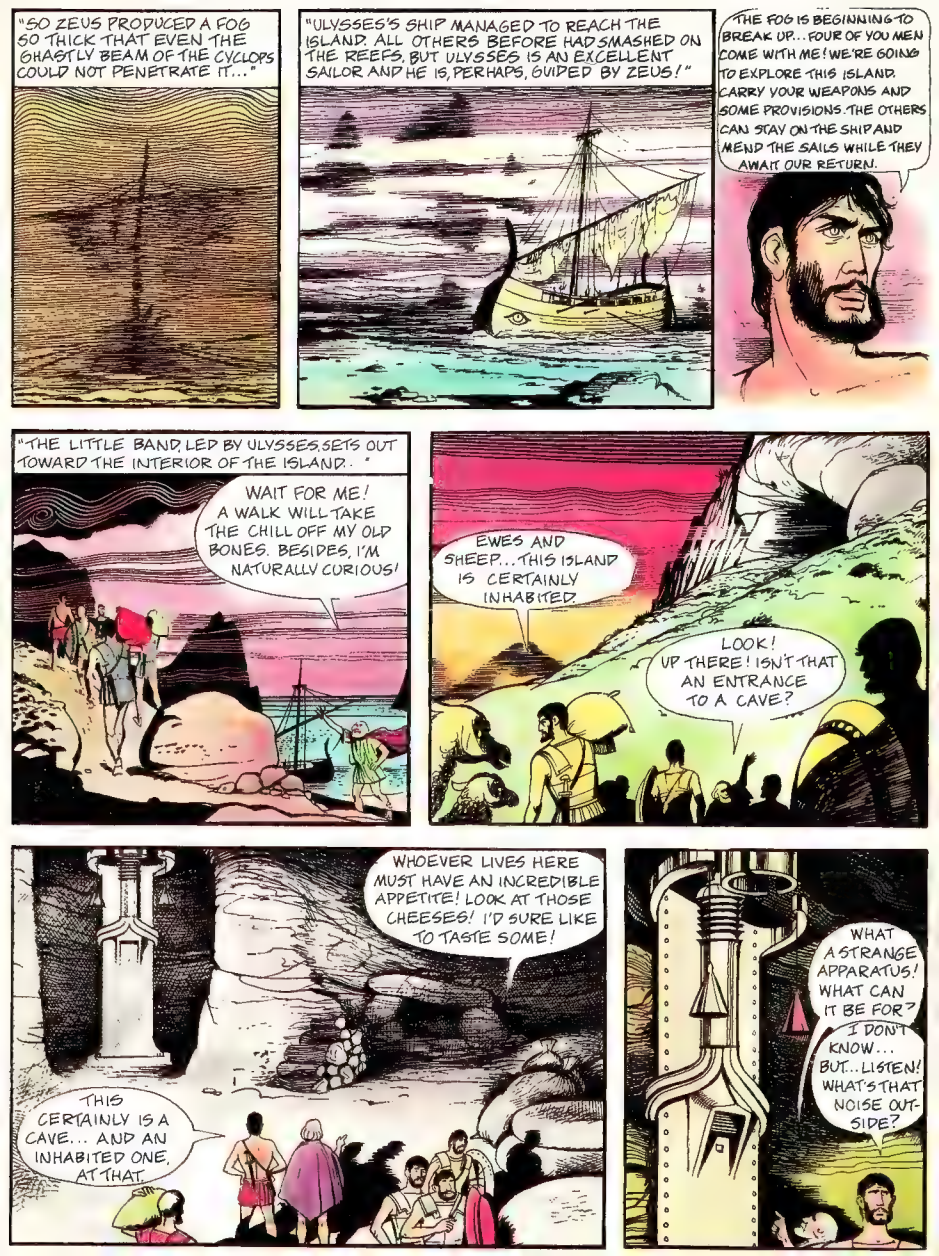
IS IT A MONSTER OR IS IT A MACHINE? NO ONE CAN ENDURE THE GLARE OF ITS GAZE. HOW MANY SAILORS... HOW MANY CAPTAINS... BLINDED BY THE TERRIBLE BEAM RADIATING FROM THE SINGLE EYE OF THE CYCLOPS, RAN AGROUND ON THE REEFS SURROUNDING THIS ACCURSED ISLAND? IS THIS THE HIDEOUS END PREPARED FOR ULYSSES AND HIS UNFORTUNATE COMPANIONS?

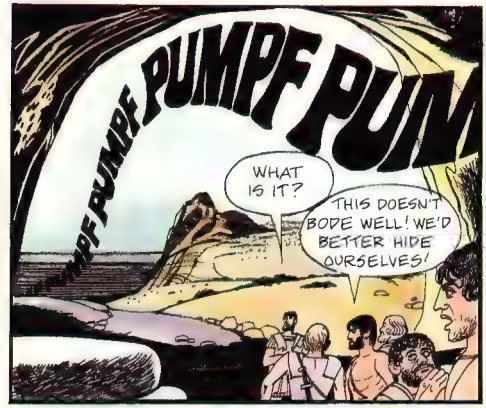


MY NAME IS POLYPHEMUS! MY MASTER POSEIDON, GOD OF THE SEA, CREATED ME TO DENY POOR MORTALS ACCESS TO THOSE MYSTERIOUS LANDS WHERE ONLY GODS MAY ENTER!

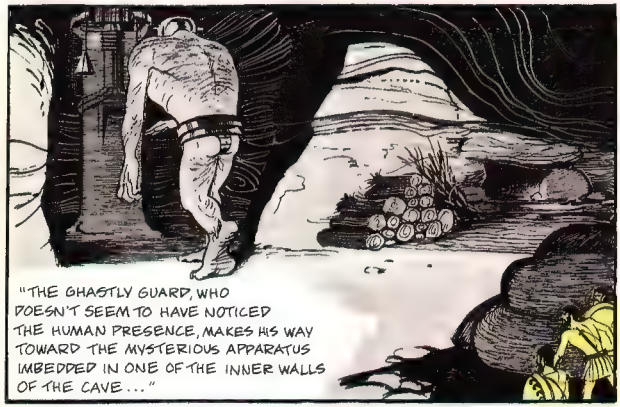





"SO ZEUS PRODUCED A FOG SO THICK THAT EVEN THE GHASTLY BEAM OF THE CYCLOPS COULD NOT PENETRATE IT..."
"ULYSSES'S SHIP MANAGED TO REACH THE ISLAND. ALL OTHERS BEFORE HAD SMASHED ON THE REEFS, BUT ULYSSES IS AN EXCELLENT SAILOR AND HE IS, PERHAPS, GUIDED BY ZEUS!"
THE FOG IS BEGINNING TO BREAK UP... FOUR OF YOU MEN COME WITH ME! WE'RE GOING TO EXPLORE THIS ISLAND. CARRY YOUR WEAPONS AND SOME PROVISIONS. THE OTHERS CAN STAY ON THE SHIP AND MEND THE SAILS WHILE THEY AWAIT OUR RETURN.
"THE LITTLE BAND, LED BY ULYSSES, SETS OUT TOWARD THE INTERIOR OF THE ISLAND..."
WAIT FOR ME! A WALK WILL TAKE THE CHILL OFF MY OLD BONES. BESIDES, I'M NATURALLY CURIOUS!
EWES AND SHEEP... THIS ISLAND IS CERTAINLY INHABITED.
LOOK! UP THERE! ISN'T THAT AN ENTRANCE TO A CAVE?
WHOEVER LIVES HERE MUST HAVE AN INCREDIBLE APPETITE! LOOK AT THOSE CHEESES! I'D SURE LIKE TO TASTE SOME!
THIS CERTAINLY IS A CAVE... AND AN INHABITED ONE, AT THAT.
WHAT A STRANGE APPARATUS! WHAT CAN IT BE FOR?
I DON'T KNOW... BUT... LISTEN! WHAT'S THAT NOISE OUTSIDE?


PUMPF PUMPF PUMPF PUMPF PUM
WHAT IS IT?
THIS DOESN'T BODE WELL! WE'D BETTER HIDE OURSELVES!

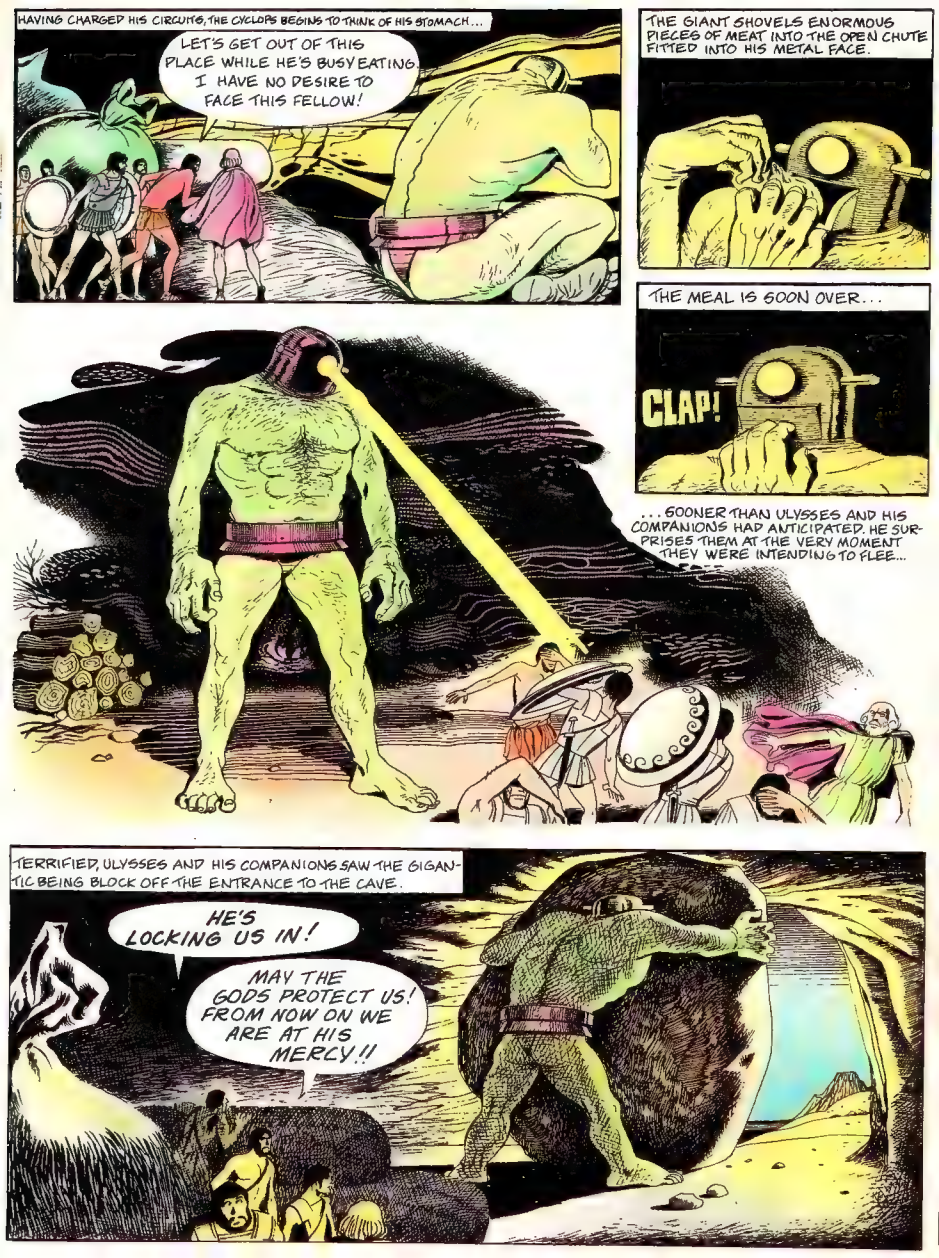
OH! BY ZEUS!..
A... A... GIANT!..
LOOK AT ITS FACE... AN EYE... ONLY ONE EYE SHINING IN THE DARK!


"THE GHASTLY GUARD, WHO DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE NOTICED THE HUMAN PRESENCE, MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD THE MYSTERIOUS APPARATUS IMBEDDED IN ONE OF THE INNER WALLS OF THE CAVE..."

WHAT'S IT DOING? THAT THING HAS STARTED BUZZING... THERE'S A HALO OF LIGHT AROUND IT... WHAT KIND OF MARVEL IS THIS? AH, THAT BEAM IS BECOMING UNBEARABLE!
IT'S AN ENCHANTMENT! LET'S GO!

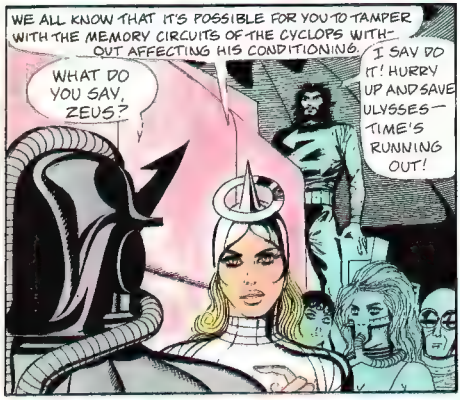
WAIT A MINUTE! THE HALO IS DIMMING... THE GIANT IS MOVING AWAY FROM THE MACHINE...
HE'S GOING TOWARD THE HEARTH!

THE WOOD IS BURSTING INTO FLAME BENEATH HIS GAZE!!
THIS MONSTER IS A CREATURE FROM HELL!


HAVING CHARGED HIS CIRCUITS, THE CYCLOPS BEGINS TO THINK OF HIS STOMACH...
LET'S GET OUT OF THIS PLACE WHILE HE'S BUSY EATING. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO FACE THIS FELLOW!
THE GIANT SHOVELS ENORMOUS PIECES OF MEAT INTO THE OPEN CHUTE FITTED INTO HIS METAL FACE.
THE MEAL IS SOON OVER...
CLAP!
...SOONER THAN ULYSSES AND HIS COMPANIONS HAD ANTICIPATED, HE SURPRISES THEM AT THE VERY MOMENT THEY WERE INTENDING TO FLEE...
TERRIFIED, ULYSSES AND HIS COMPANIONS SAW THE GIGANTIC BEING BLOCK OFF THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE.
HE'S LOCKING US IN!
MAY THE GODS PROTECT US! FROM NOW ON WE ARE AT HIS MERCY!!

MY-NAME-IS-POLYPHEMUS-AND-NO-MORTAL-CAN-WITHSTAND-MY-GAZE
ZEUS! REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE TO ME! ULYSSES MUST NOT DIE!

WELL, IN FACT, WE WANT IT THAT WAY TOO, ATHENA. BUT NOW IT'S UP TO POSEIDON TO NEUTRALIZE THIS CREATURE OF HIS.
I'D LIKE TO, ZEUS, BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN BRING IT OFF... THE CYCLOPS IS IRREVERSIBLY PROGRAMMED TO EXTERMINATE ALL HUMANS WHO APPEAR ON THE RANGES OF HIS VISION!
YOU'RE LYING!


WE ALL KNOW THAT IT'S POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO TAMPER WITH THE MEMORY CIRCUITS OF THE CYCLOPS WITHOUT AFFECTING HIS CONDITIONING.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, ZEUS?
I SAY DO IT! HURRY UP AND SAVE ULYSSES— TIME'S RUNNING OUT!

BUT ISN'T IT ALREADY TOO LATE?...
OUR SHIELDS ARE ON FIRE... THAT LIGHT DESTROYS EVERYTHING IT HITS... AH! WE'LL NEVER RETURN TO OUR HOME LANDS NOW! I WILL NEVER SEE PENELOPE AGAIN...
AT LEAST WE'RE NOT DYING IN THE DARK! STILL, I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE ADDED A COUPLE OF SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTERS TO THE TALE OF OUR ADVENTURES

RELUCTANTLY, POSEIDON COMMUNICATES WITH THE TECHNICIANS IN HIS EMPIRE BENEATH THE SEA...

THESE ARE MY ORDERS: NEUTRALIZE THE SENTINEL IMMEDIATELY! BUT MAINTAIN A CONDITION OF ALERT!

BENEATH THE SEA, THE TRITON TECHNICIANS CARRY OUT THEIR MASTER'S ORDERS.

AND A MOMENT LATER, IN THE SENTINEL'S DEN ..

THE...THE AWFUL BEAM IS DISAPPEARING...THE GIANT'S TURNING AWAY!

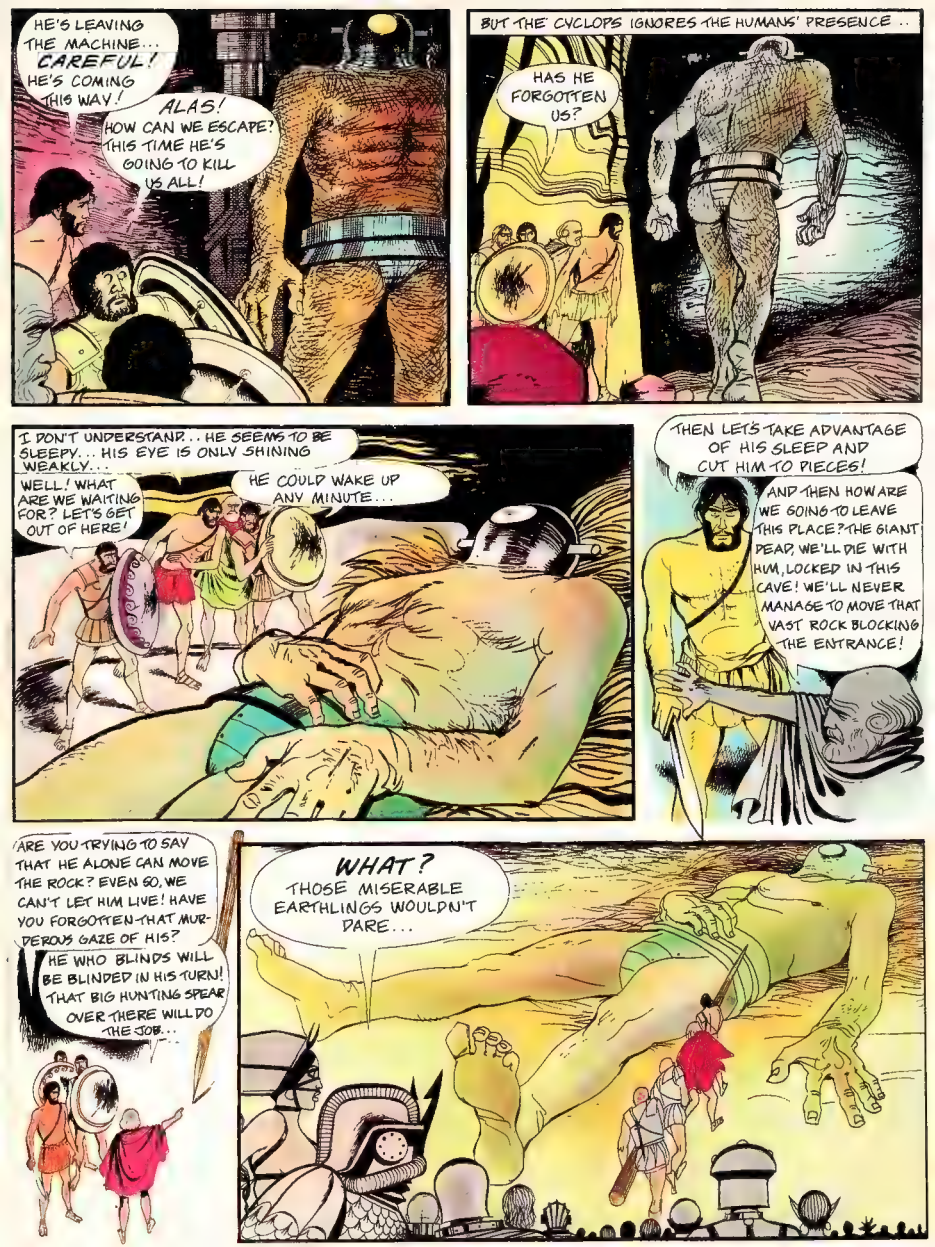
WHAT SORT OF MIRACLE..?

WERE WE NOT ALREADY DEAD?

RESPONDING TO A CALL INAUDIBLE TO HUMAN EARS, POLYPHEMUS LEAVES HIS VICTIMS IN ORDER TO IMMOBILIZE HIMSELF BY MEANS OF THE STRANGE MACHINE. A MYSTERIOUS CYLINDER LOWERS SLOWLY OVER THE CYCLOPS...

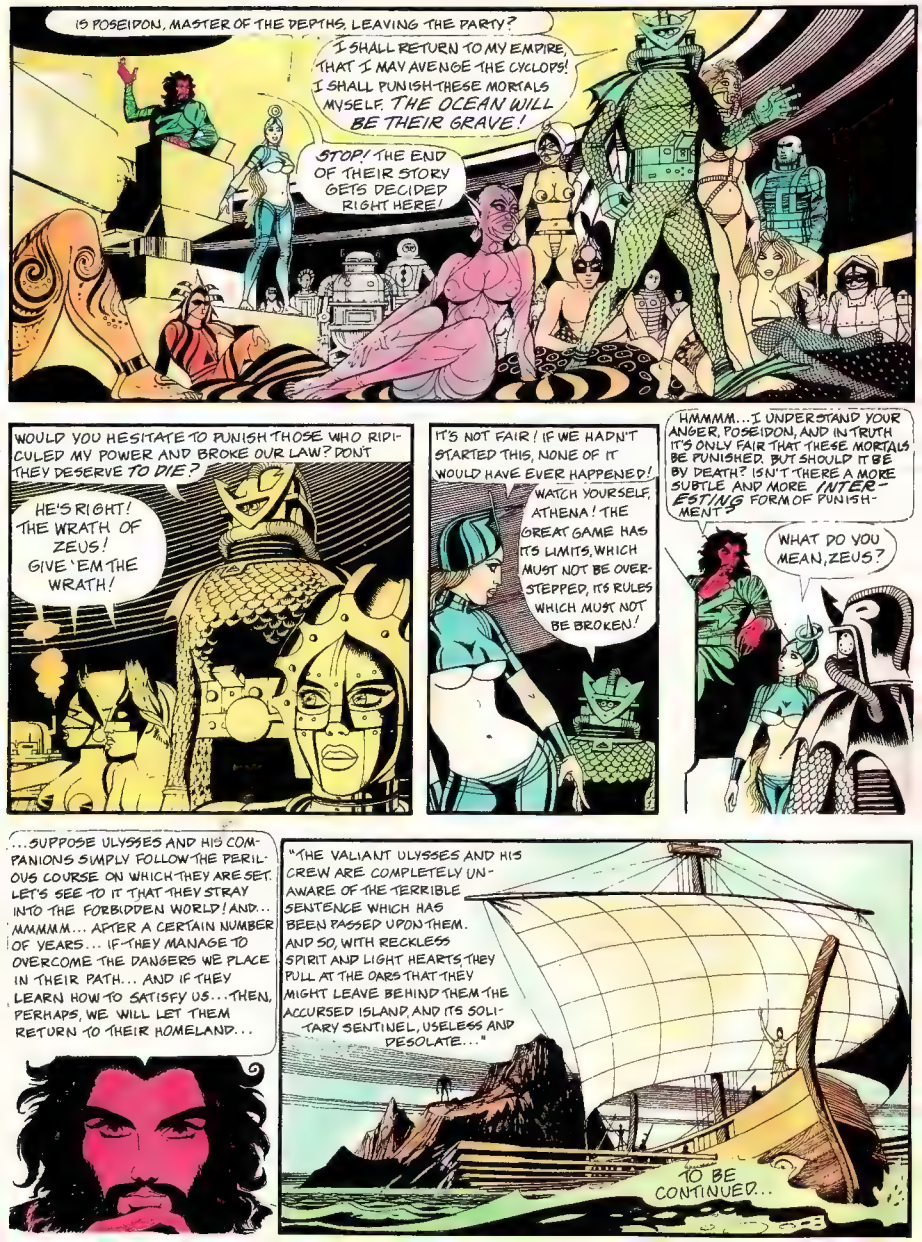
ERASE FROM HIS MEMORY ANY RECOLLECTION OF THESE LAST MOMENTS. LET HIM FORGET THE MORTALS' PRESENCE... AND LET HIM ASSUME A POSITION OF PHYSICAL RECUPERATION.

AND SO IT WILL BE SAID THAT ON THIS DAY, POSEIDON GAVE IN TO THE WILL OF ZEUS... AND THE WHIMS OF ATHENA. LADY, YOUR PROTEGES HAD BETTER TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS BREATHER TO GET OUT OF WHERE THEY ARE IN A HURRY, BECAUSE THE CYCLOPS' SLEEP WON'T LAST FOREVER!...


HE'S LEAVING THE MACHINE... CAREFUL! HE'S COMING THIS WAY!
ALAS! HOW CAN WE ESCAPE? THIS TIME HE'S GOING TO KILL US ALL!
BUT THE CYCLOPS IGNORES THE HUMANS' PRESENCE ..
HAS HE FORGOTTEN US?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... HE SEEMS TO BE SLEEPY... HIS EYE IS ONLY SHINING WEAKLY...
WELL! WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
HE COULD WAKE UP ANY MINUTE...
THEN LET'S TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS SLEEP AND CUT HIM TO PIECES!
AND THEN HOW ARE WE GOING TO LEAVE THIS PLACE? THE GIANT DEAD, WE'LL DIE WITH HIM, LOCKED IN THIS CAVE! WE'LL NEVER MANAGE TO MOVE THAT VAST ROCK BLOCKING THE ENTRANCE!
ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY THAT HE ALONE CAN MOVE THE ROCK? EVEN SO, WE CAN'T LET HIM LIVE! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT MURDEROUS GAZE OF HIS?
HE WHO BLINDS WILL BE BLINDED IN HIS TURN! THAT BIG HUNTING SPEAR OVER THERE WILL DO THE JOB...
WHAT? THOSE MISERABLE EARTHLINGS WOULDN'T DARE...

AND A-ONE... AND A-TWO... AND
...A-THREE!
KLIGHT!
THE SPEAR BREAKS OPEN, SHATTERS, WRECKS THE ELECTRONIC EYE OF THE CYCLOPS IN AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT!...
BUT ALAS, BEFORE BEING EXTINGUISHED, THE LAST FLASHING GAZE OF THE CYCLOPS STRUCK THE MOST CLEAR-SIGHTED AMONG THE MORTALS.
IT'S BECOME SO BLACK, ALL OF A SUDDEN..
WHAT IS THIS DARKNESS WHICH ENGULFS ME?
"AN EYE FOR AN EYE"—THAT IS HOW THE POET HOMER LOST HIS SIGHT IN THIS ADVENTURE...
OH, CYCLOPS, MY CONCEPT, MY CREATION, MY POLYPHEMUS! THE BEST OF SENTINELS, SABOTAGED BY THESE IDIOTS! AND TO THINK THAT THIS IS HOW I HAVE REWARDED YOU FOR SPARING THEIR MISERABLE LIVES!

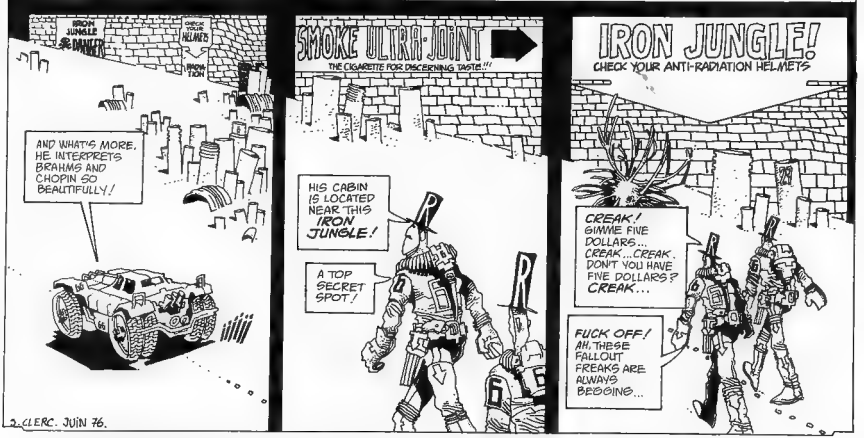
R-A-A-A-G-E
THUMP! CLAS
TLE!
"WITHIN THE CAVE, THE MUTILATED MONSTER MOVES WITH STUMBLING STEPS. IS HE SUFFERING? FROM HIS GIGANTIC CHEST THERE COMES A DEEP AND CONSTANT RATTLE... HIS VAST, DISORGANIZED BODY CRASHES AGAINST THE INNER WALLS..."
AH! HE'S GRABBING THE ROCK THAT BARS THE WAY... HE'S MOVING IT!
LET'S GO! THE WAY IS CLEAR!!!
GA-A-A-PE!
CRASH!
STAMP!
TEAR!
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME NOW?
FREE! AT LAST!
TO THE SHIP! PRAY HEAVEN THEY'RE READY TO WEIGH ANCHOR!
AH! CAPTAIN! THERE YOU ARE! WE WERE FEELING NERVOUS ABOUT YOU!... SOME VERY STRANGE THINGS SEEM TO HAPPEN ON THIS ISLAND! YOU CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT WE'VE HEARD...
AND WHAT WE'VE SEEN...
I KNOW! EVERYONE ON BOARD! LETS GET OFF THIS CURSED ISLAND AS FAST AS POSSIBLE!


IS POSEIDON, MASTER OF THE DEPTHS, LEAVING THE PARTY?
I SHALL RETURN TO MY EMPIRE, THAT I MAY AVENGE THE CYCLOPS! I SHALL PUNISH THESE MORTALS MYSELF. THE OCEAN WILL BE THEIR GRAVE!
STOP! THE END OF THEIR STORY GETS DECIDED RIGHT HERE!
WOULD YOU HESITATE TO PUNISH THOSE WHO RIDICULED MY POWER AND BROKE OUR LAW? DON'T THEY DESERVE TO DIE?
HE'S RIGHT! THE WRATH OF ZEUS! GIVE 'EM THE WRATH!
IT'S NOT FAIR! IF WE HADN'T STARTED THIS, NONE OF IT WOULD HAVE EVER HAPPENED!
WATCH YOURSELF, ATHENA! THE GREAT GAME HAS ITS LIMITS, WHICH MUST NOT BE OVERSTEPPED, ITS RULES WHICH MUST NOT BE BROKEN!
HMMMM... I UNDERSTAND YOUR ANGER, POSEIDON, AND IN TRUTH IT'S ONLY FAIR THAT THESE MORTALS BE PUNISHED. BUT SHOULD IT BE BY DEATH? ISN'T THERE A MORE SUBTLE AND MORE INTERESTING FORM OF PUNISHMENT?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ZEUS?
...SUPPOSE ULYSSES AND HIS COMPANIONS SIMPLY FOLLOW THE PERILOUS COURSE ON WHICH THEY ARE SET. LET'S SEE TO IT THAT THEY STRAY INTO THE FORBIDDEN WORLD! AND... MMMMM... AFTER A CERTAIN NUMBER OF YEARS... IF THEY MANAGE TO OVERCOME THE DANGERS WE PLACE IN THEIR PATH... AND IF THEY LEARN HOW TO SATISFY US... THEN, PERHAPS, WE WILL LET THEM RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND...
"THE VALIANT ULYSSES AND HIS CREW ARE COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF THE TERRIBLE SENTENCE WHICH HAS BEEN PASSED UPON THEM. AND SO, WITH RECKLESS SPIRIT AND LIGHT HEARTS THEY PULL AT THE OARS THAT THEY MIGHT LEAVE BEHIND THEM THE ACCURSED ISLAND, AND ITS SOLITARY SENTINEL, USELESS AND DESOLATE..."
TO BE CONTINUED...

The TIME WARP

DEFINITION: A TIME WARP IS SOMETHING THAT CAUSES TROUBLE, AND THAT'S ALL WE KNOW.

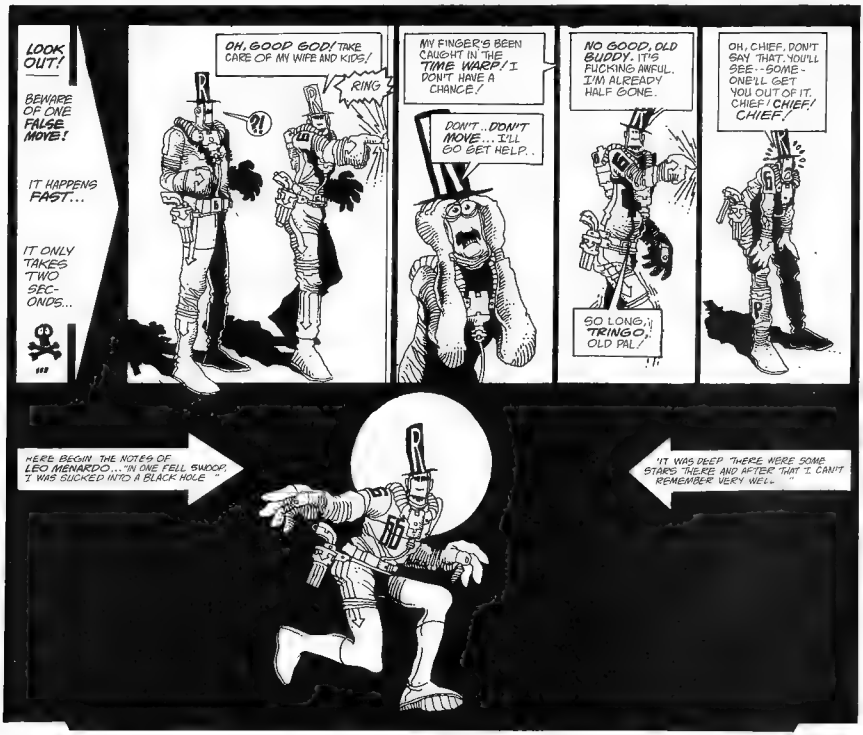
LEO MENARDO AND JOHNNY TRINGO ARE SEARCHING FOR A DANGEROUS AIR RUSTLER...
JOE CHOPIN'S
DANGER
RADIATION
GIRLS
360
NEW FOUNDATION
BEWARE: UNSTABLE AIR FOR NEXT 100 MILES
PARADISE
SAS 13C
SOLID AIR
TRIB 21
EVER SINCE THE MONTIGULE 5 BORDER OPENED, ALL SORTS OF HUSTLERS, THIEVES, AND UNRELIABLE TYPES HAVE INFILTRATED OUR BEAUTIFUL CITY OF "NEW FOUNDATION." I SWEAR, MEN ARE FOOLS.
DAMN! THAT'S THE WAY IT IS WITH ALL AIR CROP THIEVES. THEY MAKE TROUBLE AND IT'S UP TO US, THE CITY CONTAINERS...
IN MY OPINION, THE REDS ARE BEHIND THIS! THEY'RE SNEAKY BUGGERS!
WE'LL HAVE A WORD WITH CAPTAIN BLACK, HE'S A FORMER SURFACE-ZONER, HE KNOWS THE WHOLE UNDERWORLD OF NEW FOUNDATION. HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO TELL US SOMETHING...
AIR SUPPLY
AN AIR-CROP THIEF RISKS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND ALL SORTS OF DREADFUL THINGS, THAT'S THE LAW...

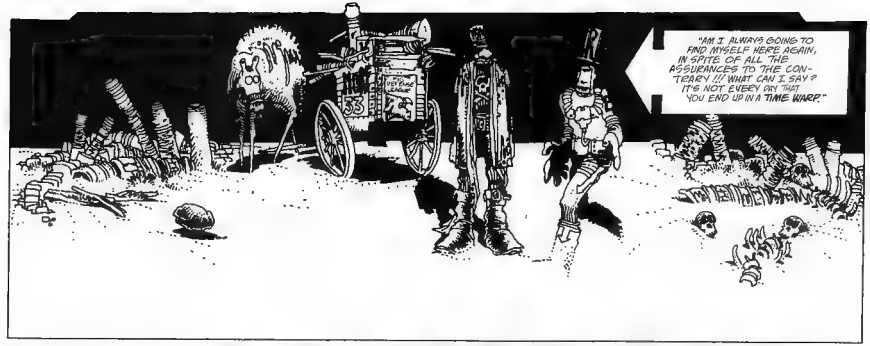

IRON JUNGLE & DANGER
CHECK YOUR HELMETS
IRON TION
AND WHAT'S MORE, HE INTERPRETS BRAHMS AND CHOPIN SO BEAUTIFULLY!
SMOKE ULTRA-JOINT
THE CIGARETTE FOR DISCERNING TASTE!!!
HIS CABIN IS LOCATED NEAR THIS IRON JUNGLE!
A TOP SECRET SPOT!
IRON JUNGLE!
CHECK YOUR ANTI-RADIATION HELMETS
CREAK! GIMME FIVE DOLLARS... CREAK... CREAK. DON'T YOU HAVE FIVE DOLLARS? CREAK...
FUCK OFF! AH, THESE FALLOUT FREAKS ARE ALWAYS BEGGING...

2. CLERC. JUIN 76.

The TIME WARP — SCRIPT & DIRECTION BY SERGE CLERC AND IN THE PRINCIPAL ROLES. LEO MENARDO · JOHNNY TRINGO and IGGY SPONGE
LIGHTINGS BY GREGORY DENTIER

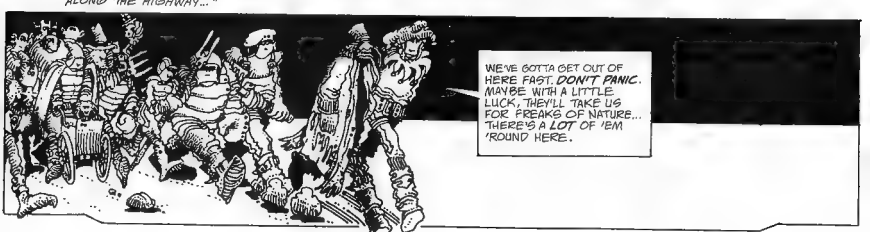
THE TWO MEN APPROACH THE TINY CABIN, AND LEO MENARDO LEANS ON THE DOORBELL

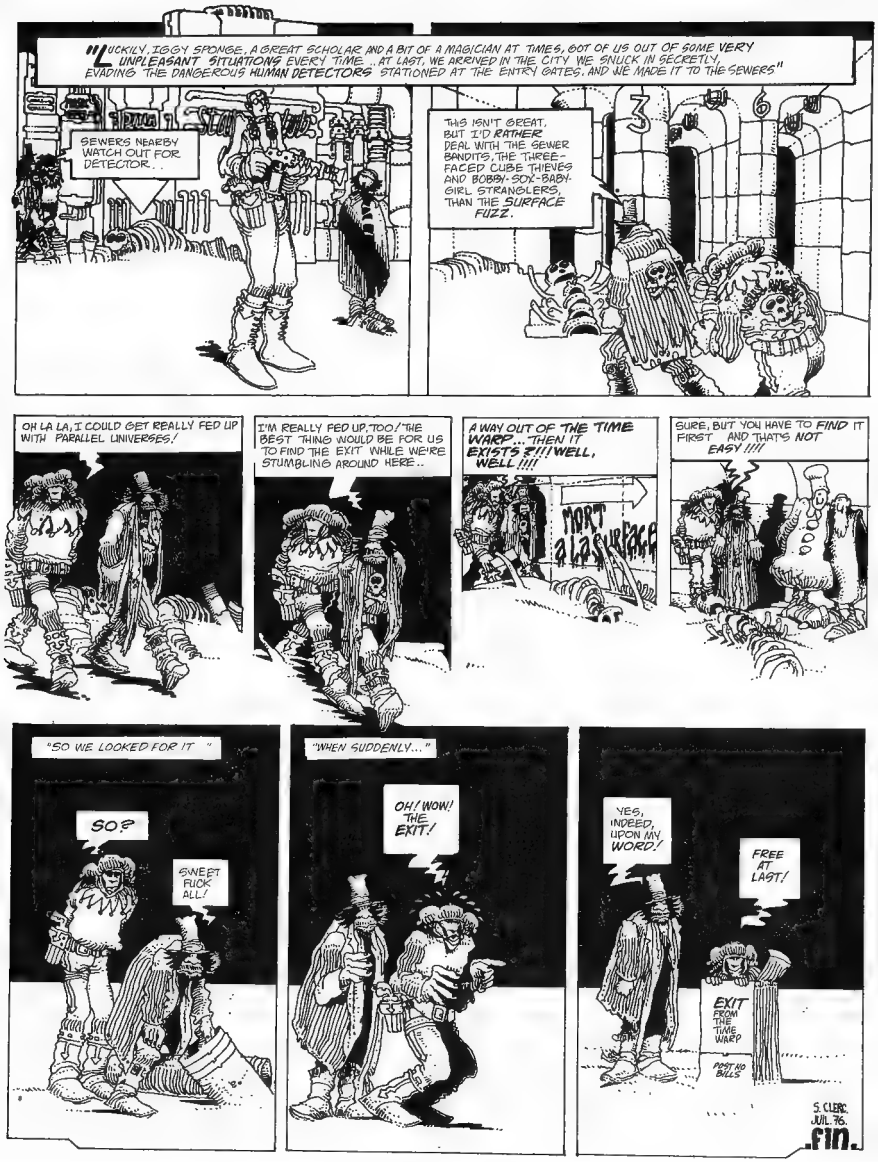

LOOK OUT!
BEWARE OF ONE FALSE MOVE!
IT HAPPENS FAST...
IT ONLY TAKES TWO SECONDS...
OH, GOOD GOD! TAKE CARE OF MY WIFE AND KIDS!
?!
RING
MY FINGER'S BEEN CAUGHT IN THE TIME WARP! I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE!
DON'T.. DON'T MOVE... I'LL GO GET HELP..
NO GOOD, OLD BUDDY. IT'S FUCKING AWFUL. I'M ALREADY HALF GONE.
SO LONG, TRINGO, OLD PAL!
OH, CHIEF, DON'T SAY THAT. YOU'LL SEE--SOME-ONE'LL GET YOU OUT OF IT, CHIEF! CHIEF! CHIEF!
"HERE BEGIN THE NOTES OF LEO MENARDO... "IN ONE FELL SWOOP, I WAS SUCKED INTO A BLACK HOLE."
"IT WAS DEEP. THERE WERE SOME STARS THERE AND AFTER THAT I CAN'T REMEMBER VERY WELL."


"AM I ALWAYS GOING TO FIND MYSELF HERE AGAIN, IN SPITE OF ALL THE ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY !!? WHAT CAN I SAY ? IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT YOU END UP IN A TIME WARP."

"THE CHARACTER I WAS FACE TO FACE WITH WAS CALLED IGGY SPONGE. HE DID BUSINESS IN ANYTHING, ANYWAY, THAT'S WHAT HE CLAIMED."
AND WHO ARE YOU?
"I REFUSED TO REVEAL MY IDENTITY AND TOOK THE OCCASION TO TELL MY STORY... HE SEEMED VERY INTERESTED AND ASSURED ME THAT HE WAS ABSOLUTELY DEVASTATED TO HEAR WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ME... WE GOT ON VERY WELL TOGETHER..."
AH!
YOU CAN'T GO AROUND WEARING THAT RIDICULOUS GET-UP...I'LL FIND YOU A MORE SUITABLE SUIT..
THERE, THAT'S BETTER!!
"THEN WE HEADED OFF IN THE DIRECTION OF THE NEAREST CITY... ON THE WAY WE WERE FOLLOWED BY MARAUDERS."
THESE MARAUDERS-- WHO ARE THEY?
YOU MIGHT CALL THEM SURFACE FUZZ-- BANDITS WHO'LL BASH YOU IN THE HEAD IF YOU START ARGUING INSTEAD OF RUNNING...
WOOP WOOP
WOOP

"OF COURSE, WE GOT AWAY FROM THEM, THANKS TO OUR CLEVER WILES... AS LONG AS OUR TRIP LASTED, WE HAD TO THINK FAST AND KEEP COOL TO ESCAPE THE TRAPS SET BY THE GANGS OF GLANDORS IN HEAT, BY THE LOOBORS OF THE BAND-A-KALDER, BY THE NAMELESS ONE OF MEURTH-AND-MOSELL, AND OTHER DEGENERATES ALONG THE HIGHWAY..."


WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE FAST. DON'T PANIC. MAYBE WITH A LITTLE LUCK, THEY'LL TAKE US FOR FREAKS OF NATURE... THERE'S A LOT OF 'EM 'ROUND HERE.


"LUCKILY, IGGY SPONGE, A GREAT SCHOLAR AND A BIT OF A MAGICIAN AT TIMES, GOT OF US OUT OF SOME VERY UNPLEASANT SITUATIONS EVERY TIME... AT LAST, WE ARRIVED IN THE CITY WE SNUCK IN SECRETLY, EVADING THE DANGEROUS HUMAN DETECTORS STATIONED AT THE ENTRY GATES, AND WE MADE IT TO THE SEWERS"
SEWERS NEARBY WATCH OUT FOR DETECTOR..
THIS ISN'T GREAT, BUT I'D RATHER DEAL WITH THE SEWER BANDITS, THE THREE-FACED CUBE THIEVES AND BOBBY SOX-BABY-GIRL STRANGLERS, THAN THE SURFACE FUZZ.
OH LA LA, I COULD GET REALLY FED UP WITH PARALLEL UNIVERSES!
I'M REALLY FED UP, TOO! THE BEST THING WOULD BE FOR US TO FIND THE EXIT WHILE WE'RE STUMBLING AROUND HERE..
A WAY OUT OF THE TIME WARP... THEN IT EXISTS?!!! WELL, WELL !!!!
SURE, BUT YOU HAVE TO FIND IT FIRST AND THAT'S NOT EASY !!!!
"SO WE LOOKED FOR IT "
SO?
SWEET FUCK ALL!
"WHEN SUDDENLY..."
OH! WOW! THE EXIT!
YES, INDEED, UPON MY WORD!
FREE AT LAST!
EXIT FROM THE TIME WARP
POSTAGE DUES
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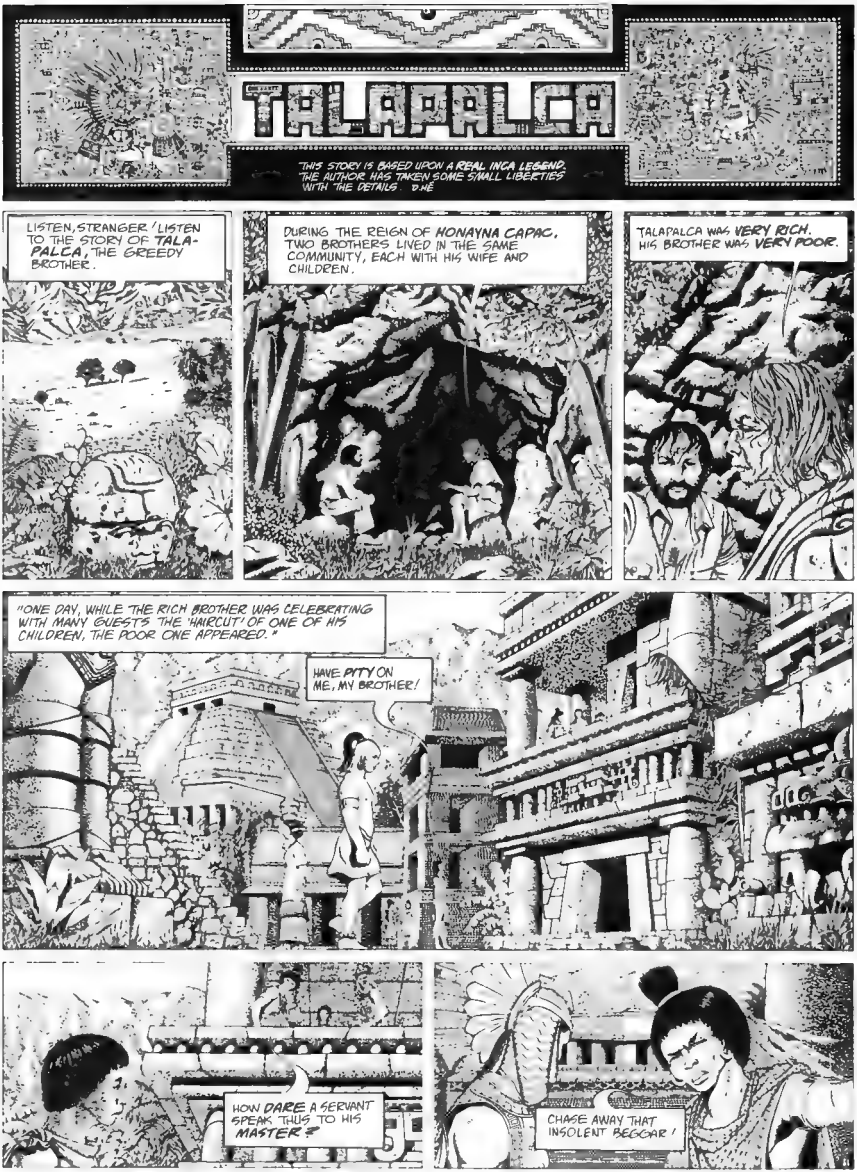
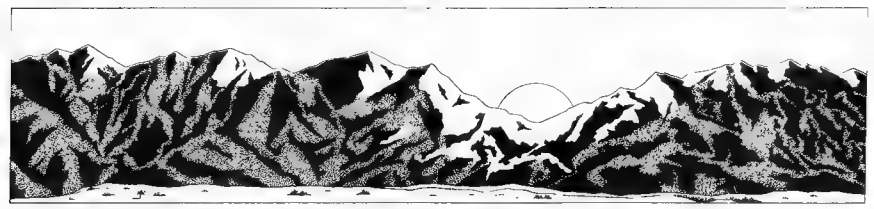

TALAPALCA
"THIS STORY IS BASED UPON A REAL INCA LEGEND. THE AUTHOR HAS TAKEN SOME SMALL LIBERTIES WITH THE DETAILS. D.ME
LISTEN, STRANGER! LISTEN TO THE STORY OF TALAPALCA, THE GREEDY BROTHER.
DURING THE REIGN OF HONAYNA CAPAC, TWO BROTHERS LIVED IN THE SAME COMMUNITY, EACH WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN.
TALAPALCA WAS VERY RICH. HIS BROTHER WAS VERY POOR.
"ONE DAY, WHILE THE RICH BROTHER WAS CELEBRATING WITH MANY GUESTS THE 'HAIRCUT' OF ONE OF HIS CHILDREN, THE POOR ONE APPEARED."
HAVE PITY ON ME, MY BROTHER!
HOW DARE A SERVANT SPEAK THUS TO HIS MASTER?
CHASE AWAY THAT INSOLENT BEGGAR!

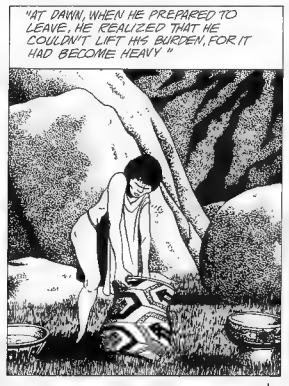
BE GONE, OR WE'LL TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR SKULL THAN YOUR MOTHER DID!*
*INCA CUSTOM DEMANDED THAT A CHILD'S HEAD BE SHAPED WITH THE HELP OF SMALL BOARDS OR STRANDS OF WOOL.
"DEEPLY GRIEVED BY THE CONTEMPT THAT HIS BROTHER HAD SHOWN HIM, THE POOR MAN LEFT TO SEARCH, AS USUAL, FOR THE HERB WHICH SERVED TO FEED HIS FAMILY."
"HE STOPPED TO REST ON A ROCK IN THE POUNA, LAMENTING HIS MISFORTUNE."
"SUDDENLY, A MYSTERIOUS VOICE CALLED TO HIM, WHENCE HE KNEW NOT."
WHY ARE YOU LAMENTING, LITTLE MAN?
IF YOU ARE XOCHIPILLI,* TAKE ME QUICKLY, SO THAT I NO LONGER SUFFER THE DISDAIN OF MY BROTHER.
I AM NOT XOCHIPILLI. I AM THE POUNA. I OFFER YOU SOLACE.
*THE EXTREMELY CRUEL GOD OF FERTILITY, WHO DEMANDED A NUMBER OF HUMAN SACRIFICES EACH YEAR.
GO TO THE OTHER SIDE OF MY MOUNTAINS, TO THE MOUNTAIN WHICH SMOKES. AN OLD MAN LIVES THERE IN A CAVE. HE WILL HELP YOU.

"OBEYING THE VOICE, MORE FROM FEAR OF DISOBEYING IT THAN FROM ANY PERSONAL DESIRE, THE YOUNG MAN SET OUT TO FIND THE OLD MAN."
"HE HAD TO TRAVEL THROUGH A DENSE FOREST."
"AND CLIMB OVER ARID MOUNTAINS."
"TO REACH 'THE MOUNTAIN WHICH SMOKES'"
"NEAR WHICH HE SAW THE SOUGHT-AFTER CAVE."
COME IN, YOUNG MAN. I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU
COME HERE! I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU!

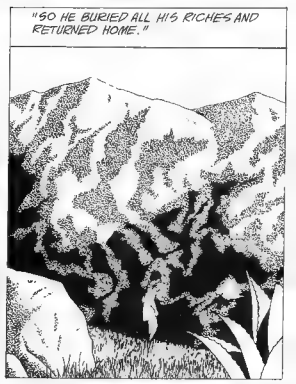
THE POUNA SPOKE OF YOU TO ME, HEE, HEE! I AM GOING TO GIVE YOU, HEE, HEE, SOMETHING, HEE HEE! YOU MUST PROMISE ME, HEE, HEE, NEVER TO BE SEPARATED FROM IT, HEE, HEE, HEE, FOR WHATEVER REASON! HEE, HEE, HEE!
I PROMISE!
HEE, HEE, HEE!
A STONE?!
YES, HEE, HEE, HEE, BUT A SACRED STONE.
IT CHANGES EVERYTHING!
NOW, HEE, HEE, GO BACK HOME, HEE, HEE, AND WAIT, HEE, HEE. DO NOT FORGET YOUR PROMISE. GO! HEE, HEE, HEE!
"THE POOR MAN WALKED QUICKLY..."
"BUT THE FALL OF A COLD NIGHT FORCED HIM TO STOP."
"HE COULDN'T MANAGE TO SLEEP, FOR HE WAS HUNGRY AND UNHAPPY, BUT WHEN HE DID AT LAST DRIFT OFF HE HEARD A CONVERSATION AMONG THE MOUNTAIN, THE POUNA, AND THE PAMPA."
I AM THE MOUNTAIN, AND I WISH TO KNOW WHY THIS POOR MAN IS WEEPING.

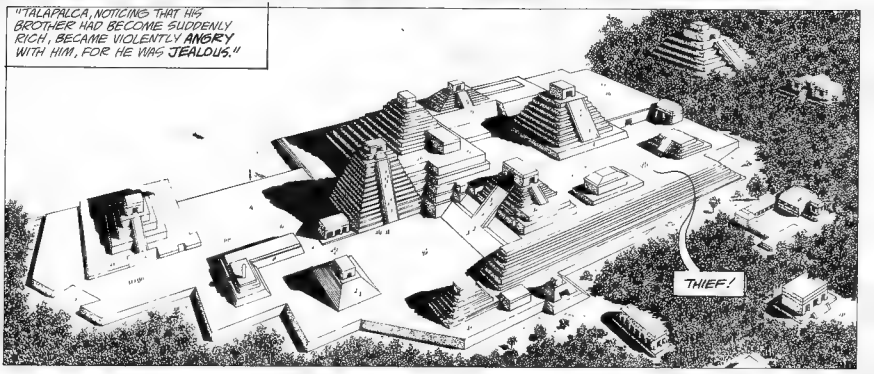
I AM THE PAMPA AND I WISH TO KNOW WHAT THIS UNFORTUNATE MAN IS COMPLAINING ABOUT.
I AM THE POUNA AND I SAY THAT THIS MAN IS WEEPING BECAUSE HIS BROTHER, WHO IS RICH, SCORNS HIM AND LEAVES HIM TO DIE OF HUNGER.
I AM THE MOUNTAIN AND I GIVE TO HIM A PORRIDGE OF WHITE CORN.
I AM THE PAMPA AND I GIVE TO HIM A PORRIDGE OF BROWN CORN.
I AM THE POUNA AND I GIVE TO HIM A PORRIDGE OF YELLOW CORN.
"REASSURED BY THIS, THE POOR MAN BEGAN TO EAT VORACIOUSLY, KEEPING A LITTLE OF THE CONTENTS OF EACH URN. HOWEVER, FOR HIS FAMILY."
"THEN HE SLEPT DEEPLY"




"AT DAWN, WHEN HE PREPARED TO LEAVE, HE REALIZED THAT HE COULDN'T LIFT HIS BURDEN, FOR IT HAD BECOME HEAVY."

"HE PONDERED THIS AND FOUND, TO HIS SURPRISE, THAT THE POROUSES OF YELLOW CORN HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO GOLD, THAT OF WHITE INTO SILVER, AND THAT OF BROWN INTO COPPER."


"SO HE BURIED ALL HIS RICHES AND RETURNED HOME."


"TALAPALCA, NOTICING THAT HIS BROTHER HAD BECOME SUDDENLY RICH, BECAME VIOLENTLY ANGRY WITH HIM, FOR HE WAS JEALOUS."
THIEF!

WHO GAVE YOU ALL THIS MONEY, THEN, IF YOU DIDN'T STEAL IT?

IF YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR TEMPER, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO ME!

"THE STORY WHICH HIS BROTHER TOLD HIM AROUSED TALAPALCA'S **GREED**, AND SO THE NEXT DAY HE LEFT TO FIND THE CAVE..."

"WHERE HE FOUND THE OLD MAN."

"HIS SOUL WAS **GREEDY**. HE WANTED ONLY **GOLD**, **SILVER**, AND **COPPER**."

HEE, HEE, HEE, HEE, HEE...

"SO THE MOUNTAIN GAVE HIM SOME **HORNS**, THE PAMPA SOME **FUR**, AND THE POUNA A **TAIL**."

SHHHH

HEE HEE, HEE!

AND FROM THAT DAY TO THIS, HE FLEES ACROSS THE **MOUNTAIN**, THE **PAMPA**, AND THE **POUNA**...

"HIS WIFE COULD NOT RECOGNIZE HIM..."

"SHE CHASED HIM AWAY, SETTING THE DOGS ON HIM..."

THE END

Narrowly escaping disaster, they wander in a daze from crisis to crisis. Do they care nothing for their own best interests?
It is a shame. It seems some people blunder their lives away.
They can't be helped. I know. I've tried. What was the thanks I got? TREACHERY!
. . .And still they return expecting forgiveness.
I have ultimately supreme goals myself. But unlike some would be heroes, I plan my life with cold mechanical logic. Every decision is weighed carefully against possible—
ARD! Enough of your lecture. I've got the Locnar. Will you bargain?
All in due time. Kang, I guess my worst fault is that even after I have been cheated, hurt severely, I still welcome my former friends with an open heart.
DEN

For God's sake, return my family to me and the Locnar is yours.
Not so fast! These things must be done delicately so as not to disturb the supernormal atmospheres.
I trusted you, Kang, and you cheated me. . .so now before this exchange can be made. . . you must trust me.
Give me the Locnar now.

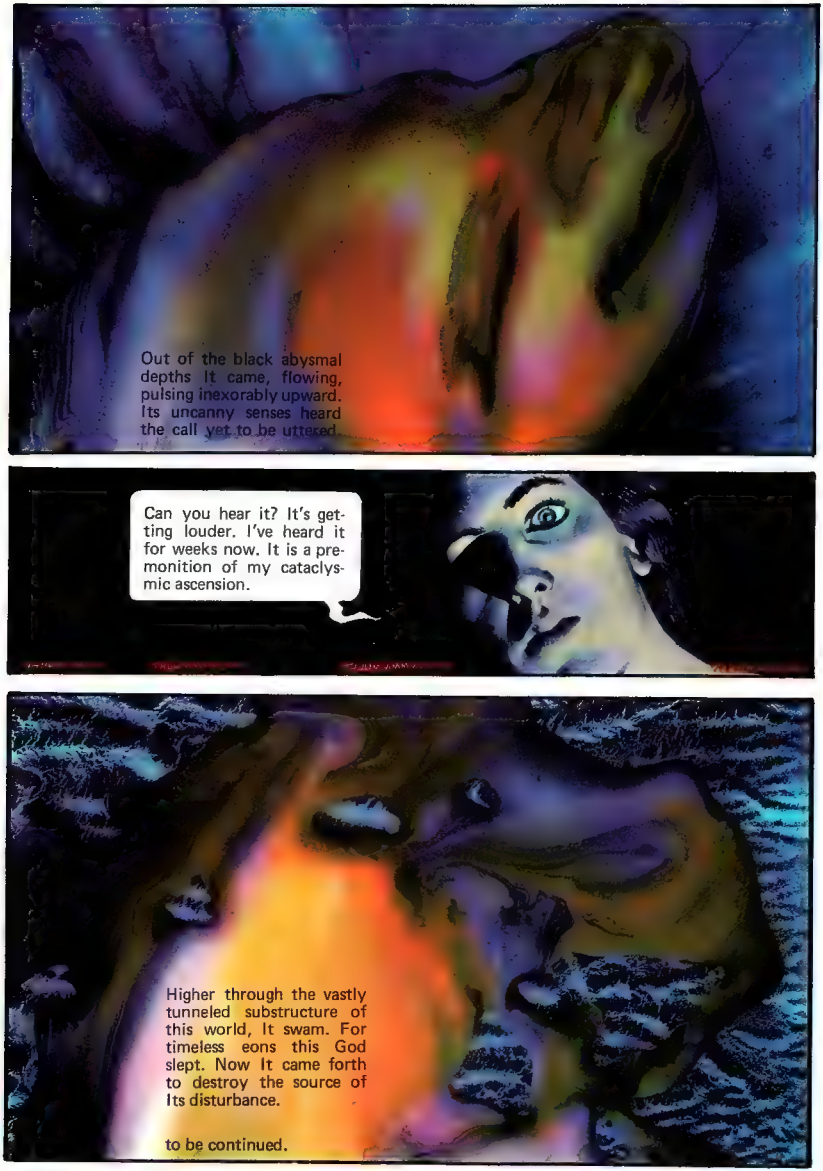
AAAAAAAAAAHH!
Hah, Hah, Hah,
Hah, Hah, Hah,
Nervous, Kang?
Bron, Jopo, set his mind at ease. Bring out his loved ones.
YANDORA!
KRON!
KANG!
I just love reunions. All will be forgiven, Kang, if you'll do just one other little thing for me.
I will use Kath for the sacrifice, but Den is bound to make a nuisance of himself. Kill him, Kang.
NO!
We're quits, now and forever!

I knew you would betray me again.
AAAAAAAAHH!
THUNK!
Shall we pursue, sire?
SPOK
At a pace. He won't go far.

AARRRR

Your wish. . .
is. . .
my. . .
command.
K-KRAK
Soon, very soon the incredible powers of the Universe will be at my command. I think I should prepare Kath.
You two seek out Den. He's probably sneaking around here somewhere. Kill him.
Heh, heh, heh! Soon, very soon.

Aaah! The sleeping beauty.
Now, Kath, I, Ard, bid you. . .awaken!
DEN!. . .oh Den, where are you?
How can you speak the name of that worthless pawn when you are presented with the magnificent Ard?
Your and Den's time is running out. For some consideration I can see to it that your last moments are spent together.
THUUMMMMM
THUUMMMMM
THUUMMMMM
THUUMMMMM

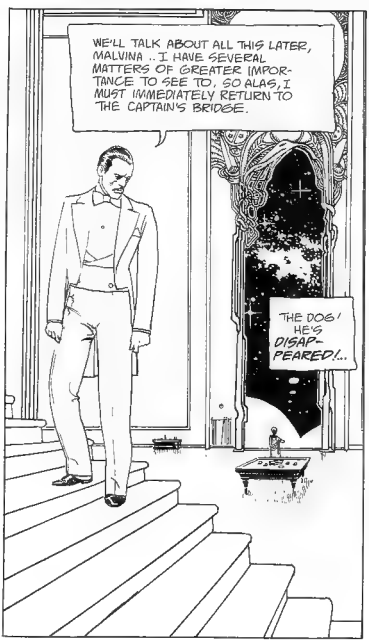

Out of the black abysmal depths It came, flowing, pulsing inexorably upward. Its uncanny senses heard the call yet to be uttered.
Can you hear it? It's getting louder. I've heard it for weeks now. It is a premonition of my cataclysmic ascension.
Higher through the vastly tunneled substructure of this world, It swam. For timeless eons this God slept. Now It came forth to destroy the source of Its disturbance.
to be continued.

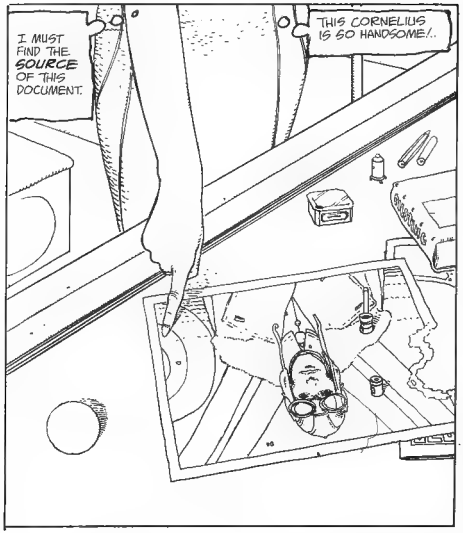
THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE of JERRY CORNELIUS

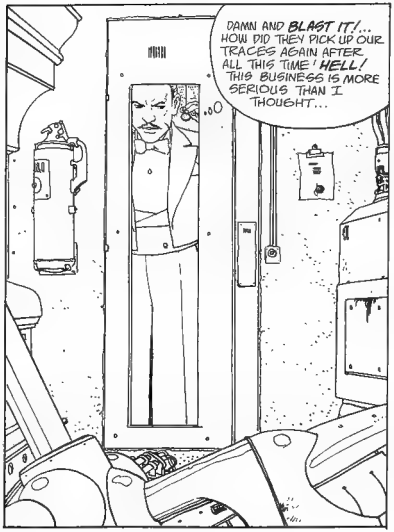
FIFTH EPISODE: THE MAJOR DISAPPEARS

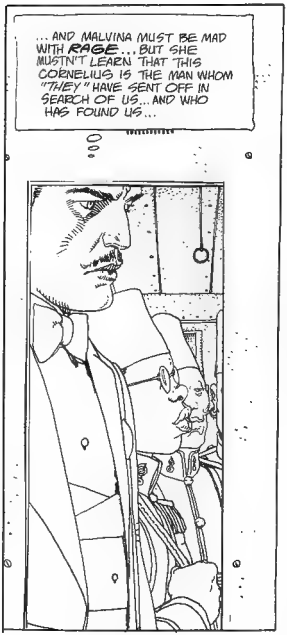
THE STORY TO DATE: EVERYTHING IS GOING VERY BADLY IN JERRY'S GARAGE. THE ENGINEER **BARNABUS,** WHILE ATTEMPTING TO **ESCAPE,** KILLED A GUARD, THE FATHER OF TWO CHILDREN. AS FOR THE MAJOR'S SPY, HE ONLY REACHED THE SECOND LEVEL, HAVING HAD TO SACRIFICE THE GIANT ROBOT **"STAR BILLIARD."**

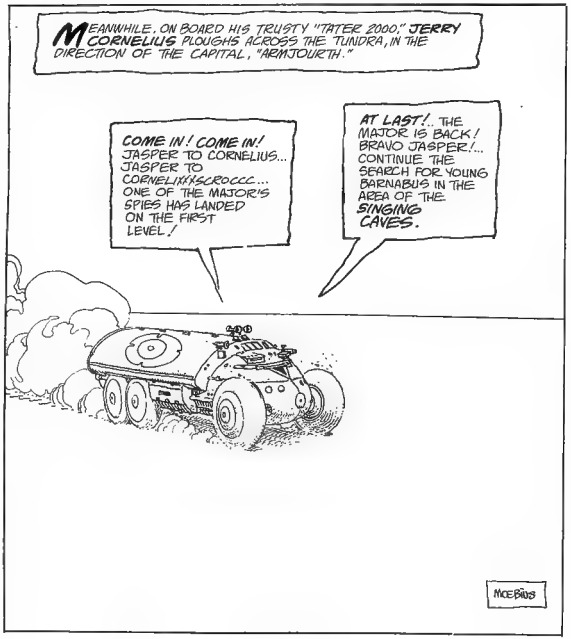
MEANWHILE, ON BOARD THE "CIGUE," THE PERSONAL SPACE-SHIP OF MAJOR GRUBERT...
THAT'S HIM! HIS NAME WOULD BE JERRY CORNELIUS. AN INTELLIGENCE REPORT FROM TITAN CLAIMS THAT HE COMES FROM EARTH, AN OUTLYING PLANET WHICH I KNOW FROM HAVING STAYED THERE. IF THIS INFORMATION IS CORRECT, OUR TROUBLES HAVE ONLY BEGUN.


WE'LL TALK ABOUT ALL THIS LATER, MALVINA . . I HAVE SEVERAL MATTERS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE TO SEE TO, SO ALAS, I MUST IMMEDIATELY RETURN TO THE CAPTAIN'S BRIDGE.
THE DOG! HE'S DISAPPEARED!..


I MUST FIND THE SOURCE OF THIS DOCUMENT.
THIS CORNELIUS IS SO HANDSOME!..


DAMN AND BLAST IT!... HOW DID THEY PICK UP OUR TRACES AGAIN AFTER ALL THIS TIME! HELL! THIS BUSINESS IS MORE SERIOUS THAN I THOUGHT...


... AND MALVINA MUST BE MAD WITH RAGE... BUT SHE MUSTN'T LEARN THAT THIS CORNELIUS IS THE MAN WHOM "THEY" HAVE SENT OFF IN SEARCH OF US... AND WHO HAS FOUND US...

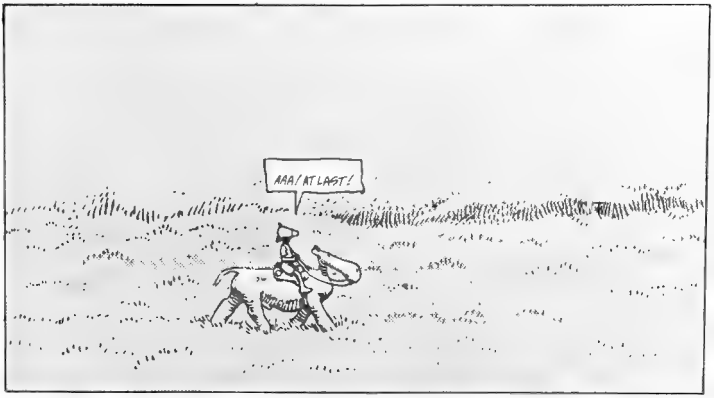

MEANWHILE, ON BOARD HIS TRUSTY "TATER 2000," JERRY CORNELIUS PLOUGHS ACROSS THE TUNDRA, IN THE DIRECTION OF THE CAPITAL, "ARMJOURTH."
COME IN! COME IN! JASPER TO CORNELIUS... JASPER TO CORNELIXXSCROCCC... ONE OF THE MAJOR'S SPIES HAS LANDED ON THE FIRST LEVEL!
AT LAST!, THE MAJOR IS BACK! BRAVO JASPER!... CONTINUE THE SEARCH FOR YOUNG BARNABUS IN THE AREA OF THE SINGING CAVES.
MOEBIUS

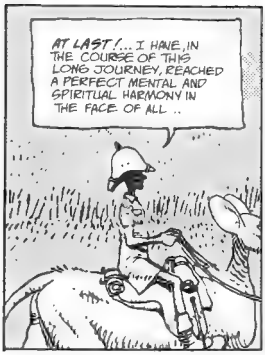
THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE of JERRY CORNELIUS

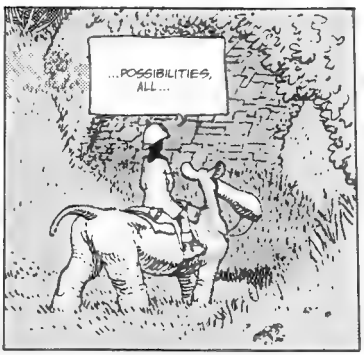
by MOEBIUS and MOEBIUS

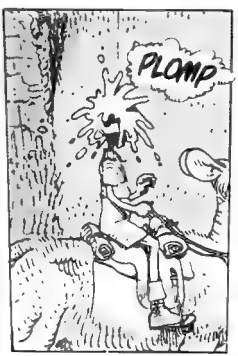
STORY TO DATE:

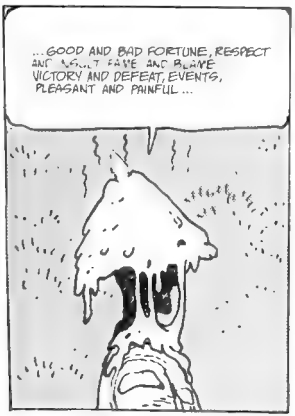
MAJOR MABUBERT HIMSELF HAS LEFT TO SEARCH FOR J. CORNELIUS. RIDING A MALBO, HE SOON REACHES THE SCHWANG COUNTRY WHERE HE HOPES TO FIND SOME HELP

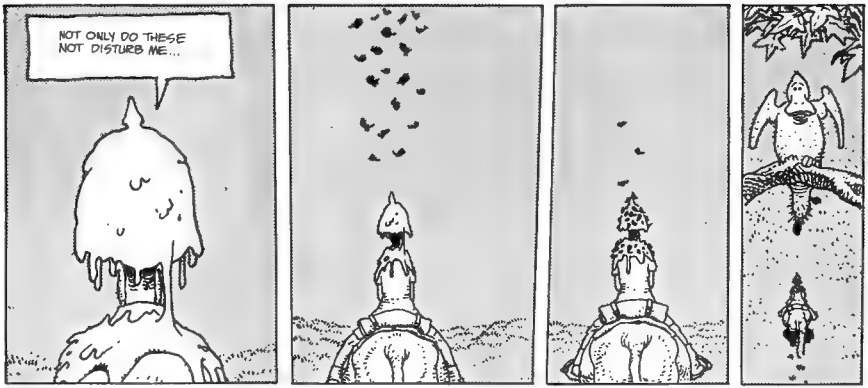


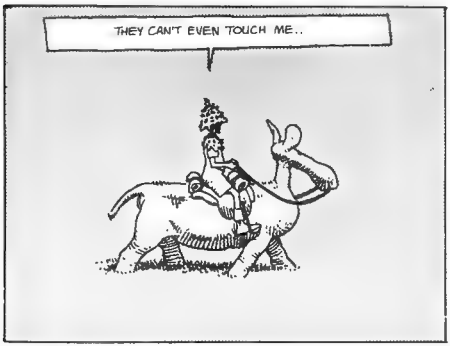




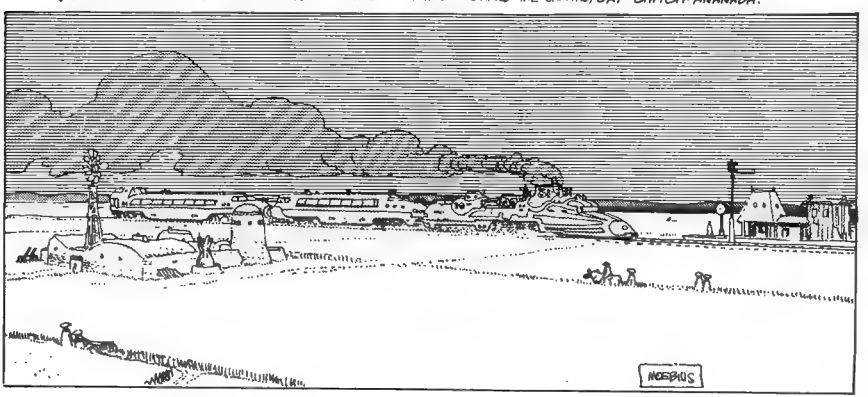


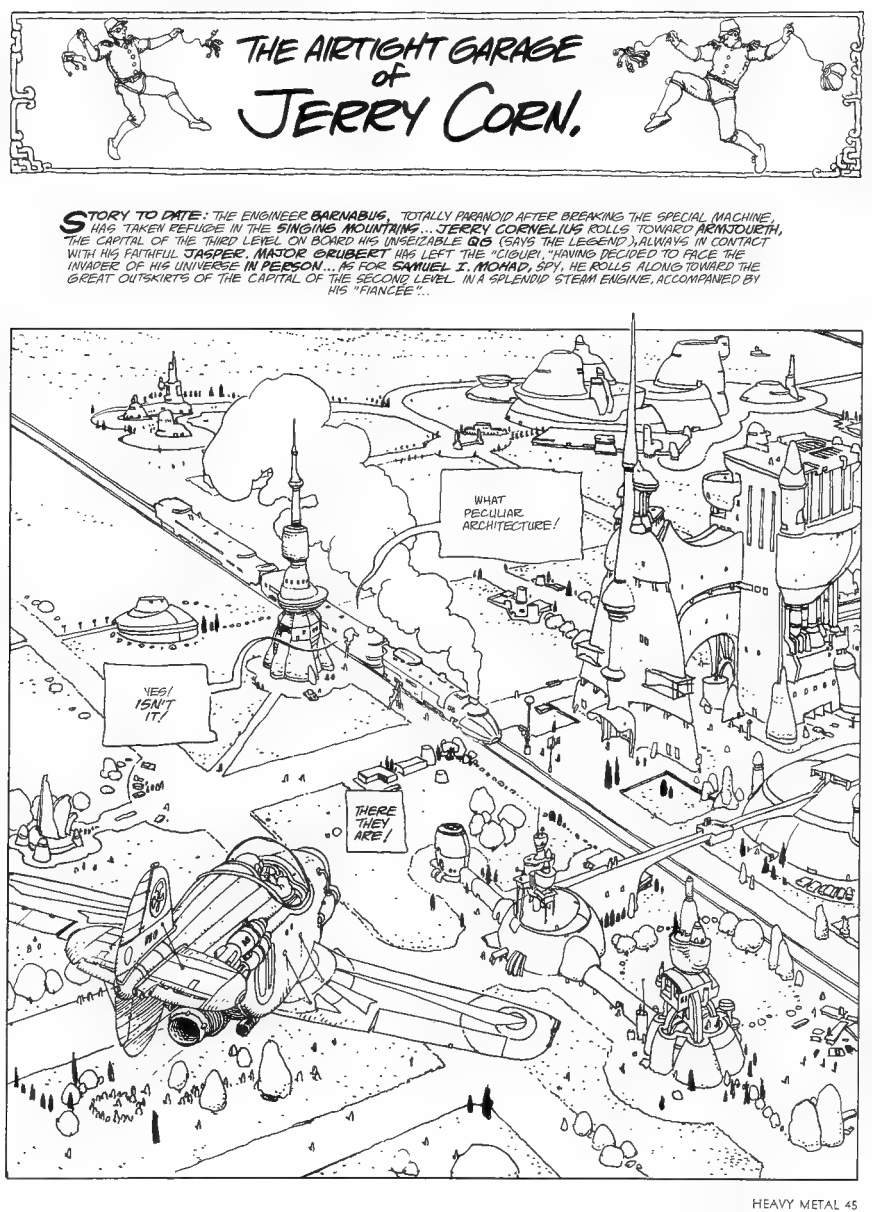


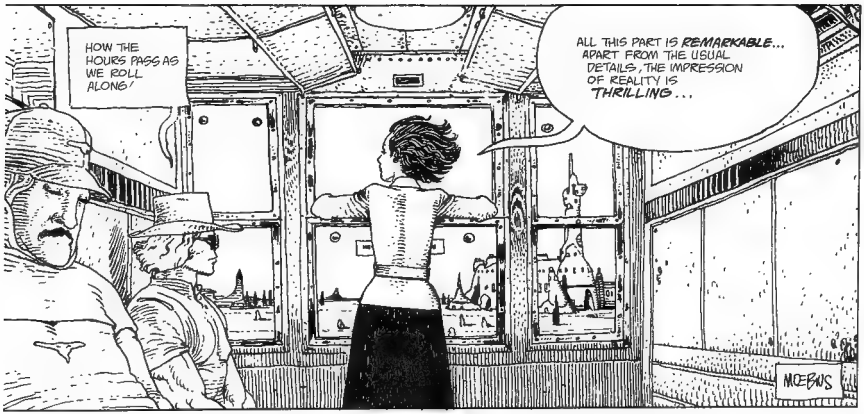


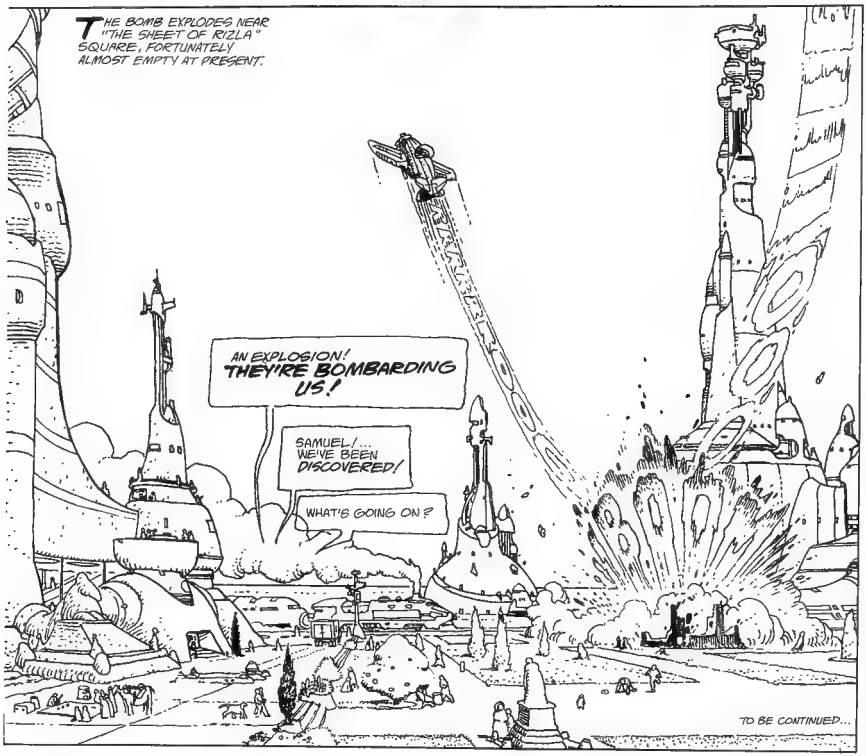


MEANWHILE, THE WONDERFUL STEAM ENGINE FLIES ACROSS THE GREAT FERTILE PRAIRIES OF THE SECOND LEVEL, CARRYING THE MAJOR'S SPY AND HIS YOUNG COMPANION TOWARD THE CAPITAL, SAT-CHITCH-ANANADA.




THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE of JERRY CORN.
STORY TO DATE: THE ENGINEER BARNABUS, TOTALLY PARANOID AFTER BREAKING THE SPECIAL MACHINE, HAS TAKEN REFUGE IN THE SINGING MOUNTAINS... JERRY CORNELIUS ROLLS TOWARD ARMJOURTH, THE CAPITAL OF THE THIRD LEVEL ON BOARD HIS UNSEIZABLE QG (SAYS THE LEGEND), ALWAYS IN CONTACT WITH HIS FAITHFUL JASPER. MAJOR GRUBERT HAS LEFT THE "CIGUEL" HAVING DECIDED TO FACE THE INVADER OF HIS UNIVERSE IN PERSON... AS FOR SAMUEL I. MOHAD, SPY, HE ROLLS ALONG TOWARD THE GREAT OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL OF THE SECOND LEVEL IN A SPLENDID STEAM ENGINE, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS "FIANCÉE"..
WHAT PECULIAR ARCHITECTURE!
YES! ISN'T IT!
THERE THEY ARE!

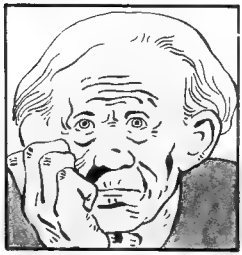

HOW THE HOURS PASS AS WE ROLL ALONG!
ALL THIS PART IS REMARKABLE... APART FROM THE USUAL DETAILS, THE IMPRESSION OF REALITY IS THRILLING...
MŒBIUS


THE BOMB EXPLODES NEAR "THE SHEET OF RIZLA" SQUARE, FORTUNATELY ALMOST EMPTY AT PRESENT.
AN EXPLOSION! THEY'RE BOMBARDING US!
SAMUEL!... WE'VE BEEN DISCOVERED!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
TO BE CONTINUED...

1996

CHANTAL MONTELLIER

CRAZY DAM THING HABBENA ME, COME TAYRIN INA NYORK TEYNA PIGUB A FOG LITE... IGOD THIZ FYDE UBINTARIO NEGSDAY... FIGURE BEDDER TAYGA CAR, BUD THIZ FOG GOIN ON LAZ CUBBLA WEEGS... I WANNA BUY A PAYRA FOG LITES. MAYBZ SENZ, RIDE?
FIGUREI GODDA FYN THAD KINDA STUFF HERE, AN I'M ONA ROAD, AN I SEE THIZ RILLY BIG JUNGYARD, KINDA DUMP, YAKNOW, AN I FIGURE SO, FOG LITES DON HAVTA BE NEW!...



MARS
IYUZ SAYIN, I GED OWID TH CAR, AN NATCHERLY LOOG FUR MY WALLID...
HUH. AN THEN?
AN THEN... NO FUGGIN WALLID!
MAGINE ID! JUZ MAGINE ID! I COME TAYEIN ALLAWAY NYORK T BUYA CUBBLA FOG LITES AN I'M STANIN AROUN AN I DON EVEN HAVENUV BAZ T GED BAG!
CAN YU MAGINE ID?
HMMM
I JUZ GODDA GED WOME IZALL. I KNOW IO SOWNZ DUM...
JUZ A SEG!
D GIVID BAG RIDE AVDER THE FIRE, YKNOW!
HERE. FUR TH FOG LITES.
BUD I CAND...
TAYG ID!
TS OGAY
I TRUZ YOU!

SO, HOWZ ID GOIN AD TH JIM?
AW, YKNOW. NOD GOOD, NOD BAD... BUD IDZ NOD TH SAME AZID WUZ WHEN YOOR THERE, I MEAN...
THIZGUY PEREZ, HEEZ A GOOD DRAYNER ANALL, BUD HEEZ WEERD! ALLAGUYS MISS YOU, FURGHER!
ANYWAYZ...
I GODDA GED GOIN...
HEY, BOSS! HOWBOUDA DEING?
CUMIN, CUMIN...
MEMBER NOW, COME SEE 'FREDO NEVER YOU WANNA... NIF YOU NEED BUMPIN, YKNOW...
TAYG CARE IN TH RING!
DON WORRY...
I PAG BAG MY DETS!
SPARE CHANGE, MISDER?
HEY!
MISDER...
SEEYA ROUN!
LAYDER!
ZZA
95

BLUE MOON BAR
BLUE MOON BAR
COME To BELEPAV

HIM MAGAZINE
IT RAISES YOUR SOUL!
the most dangerous game
Match 51
BELEPAV,
THE MOST WONDERFUL DUMP IN THE STATE!
WELCOME TO
BELEPAV!
Fin

CHAIN MAIL

Gentlemen:
. . . Let's see more of "Den" up and around, so to speak. On page 49 of your last issue, Corben missed a terrific opportunity to show our hero at his manly best. Why so coy? . . . More, more, more!

Happy Reader
Knoxville, Tenn.

So help us, that is a real letter. And so is this:

Dear *HM*:
Wow! I had heard about *Heavy Metal* and decided to check it out. I was impressed (understatement of the millenium) . . .

Jim Bierbaum
Dover, Delaware

Thank you, James. Perhaps you could open a pen pal relationship with young Mike, who writes . . .

Dear Editors:
I'd like to mention a few things that I'm certain aren't news to you, but that you may have chosen to forget/ignore.

Your subscription cards might be more accurate if they read: "Only the publishers who had the money to bring you the *National Lampoon* would give you *Heavy Metal*." Let's face it, cash is what you're all about. You don't even have the creativity to look for submissions other than what *Metal Hurlant* accepts. You are exploiting the art form; you are corporate cultists.

My greatest personal complaint, aside from your shocking lack of creativity, is your brutal mutilation of Vaughn Bodé's "Sunpot." The concept that you would use another artist to color his work is disturbing, but it becomes appalling when the surrogate artist colors in a style *not even similar* to that of the original artist!!

I have no real qualms with the quality of the art; every piece *is* stunning, and the format and concept is a welcome one. I only wish it could have been done with more compassion, caring, and perhaps honesty.

Mike Wagner
Newport Beach, Calif.

Gee, Mike,that's a kick right in the old cash nexus! If we ever get out Newport Beach way, let's sit down and grok some stone ground bullshit together! –Eds.

COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

HM #1/APRIL, 1977: With Space Punks, the first chapters of Corben's Den and Bode's Sunpot, an excerpt from the best-selling fantasy novel *The Sword of Shannara,* Harzak, and more. $4.00

HM #2/MAY, 1977: Introducing Roger, the paranoid puppet, Virgo, the cosmic maiden, Russian astronauts, Conquering Armies, the ultimate rock festival, while Harzak, Sunpot, and Den continue. ($4.00)

HM #3/JUNE, 1977: Features *Night Images,* poetry by Conan's creator, Robert E. Howard, with illustrations by Corben; Macedo's Rockblitz, the highly praised Shells, the first chapter of Davis's World Apart, more Den, Sunpot, and Harzak. ($3.00)

HM #4/JULY, 1977: Is a must for Moebius fans, with 12 pages of Harzak and his s/f spy saga, The Long Tomorrow, also the end of Sunpot, further adventures of Den, the psychic Nep Simo, and the horrible Gold Queen. ($3.00)

HM #5/AUGUST, 1977: In which the saga of Polonius begins, The Long Tomorrow concludes, World Apart and Den continue, all amidst talking plants, samurai, puppets, sex, and violence. ($2.00)

HM #6/SEPTEMBER, 1977: Galactic aztecs, cosmic cowboys, hysterical shrubbery, chemically-induced sanity, a Moebius space opera, more World Apart, Den, and Polonius, plus a Roger Zelazny short story. ($2.00)

HM #7/ OCTOBER, 1977: Packed with knights, ladies, jet pilots; insanity, reincarnation, and other harmless pastimes; 10 pages of color Moebius; the Airtight Garage, Den and Polonius *redux;* and fiction by Theodore Sturgeon. ($2.00)

HM #8/NOVEMBER, 1977: With nine color pages by Moebius and Rimbaud, the conclusions of both Polonius and World Apart, ex-pugs, intellectual mollusks, birth and death stars, and a great new Harlan Ellison story — the heaviest *Heavy Metal* yet! ($2.00)

HM #9/ DECEMBER, 1977: This time, went up to 104 pages to bring you the complete saga of Druillet's anti-hero, Vuzz, a chapter from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind,* and Fortune's Fool by Chaykin and Wein, in addition to full color contributions from regulars Corben, Macedo, Claveloux, and Moebius.($2.00)

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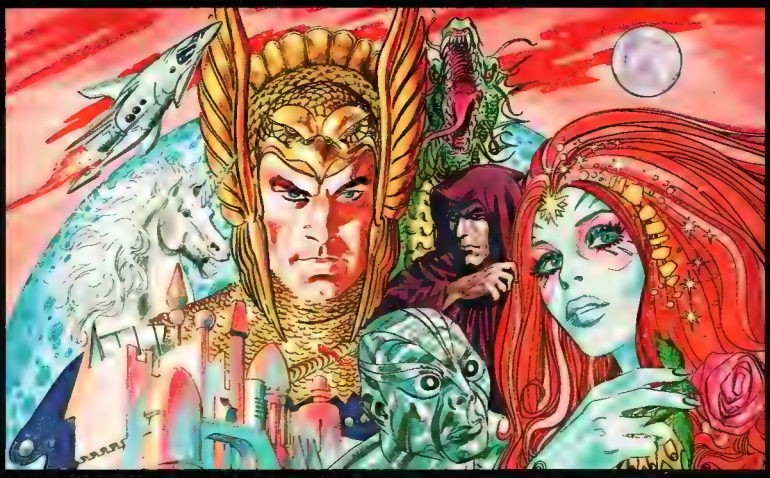

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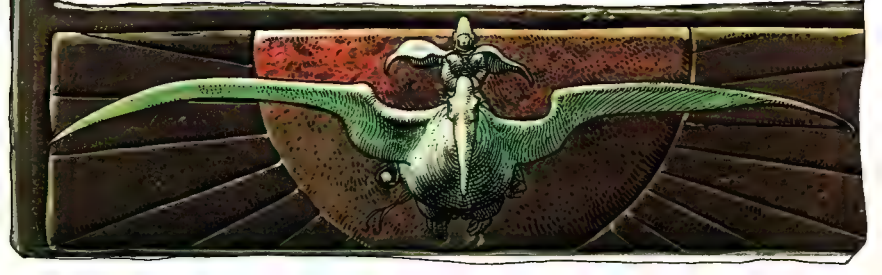
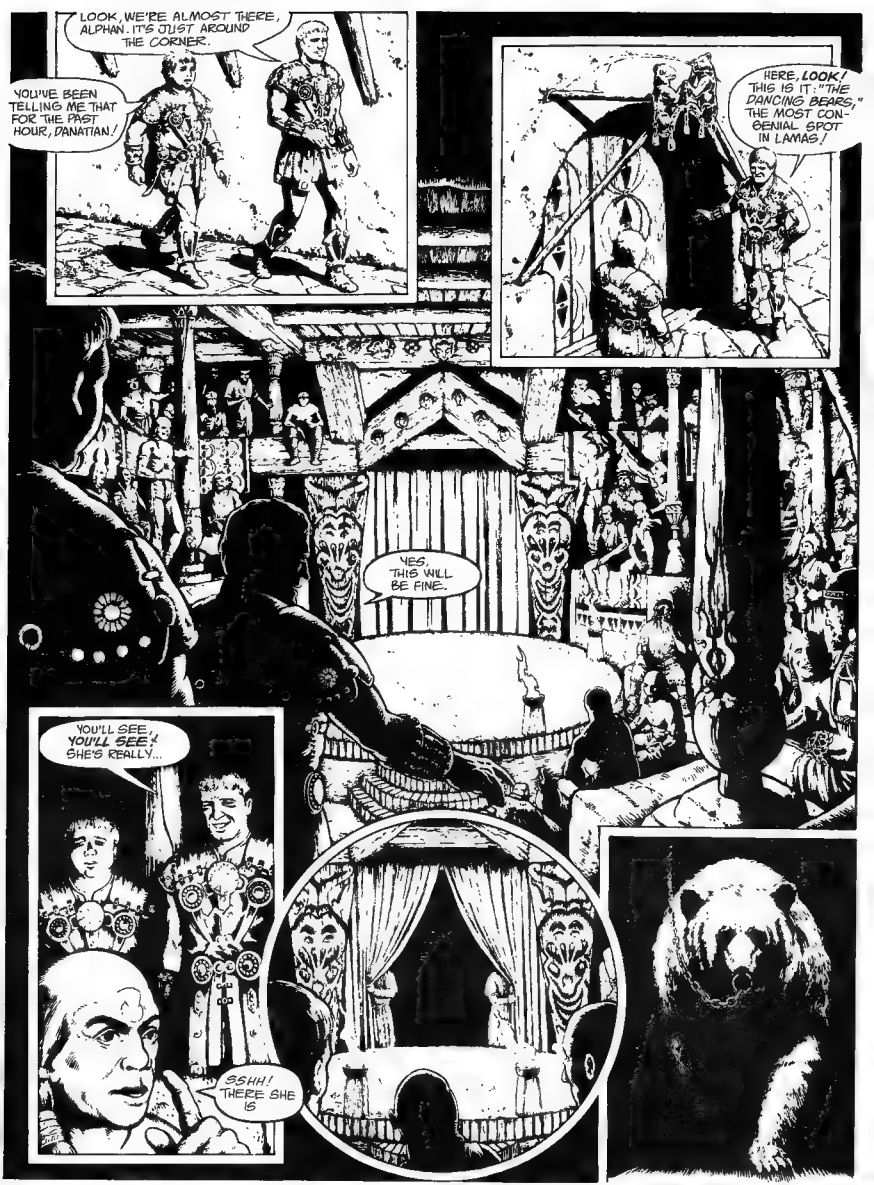


HERE I AM, MADAME.
SPACE SOAP OPERA
SO, YOU RECEIVED YOUR DEPARTURE ORDER, CARL...?
YES, THIS MORNING, THE ORDER WAS TRANSMITTED ON THE TELEPRINTER... I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT RIGHT AWAY...
AND... YOU CAN'T ASK CENTRAL TO DELAY IT... EVEN FOR A FEW DAYS...
NO, YOU KNOW THAT THE ORDER IS ABSOLUTE. I MUST LEAVE HERE TODAY TO TAKE UP MY NEW ASSIGNMENT.
OH, CARL!... OF COURSE, I KNEW FROM THE FIRST DAY THAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE ME IN A YEAR, BUT...
THIS IS DOUBTLESS GOING TO SEEM INCREDIBLE TO YOU... BUT... I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE FEELING...
I KNOW IT, CARL, YOU ARE SO MUCH LIKE A... A...
DON'T SAY ANYTHING. I MUST LEAVE YOU NOW.
I WON'T SAY FAREWELL TO YOU. I WON'T! I WON'T!
WILL YOUR... REPLACEMENT... BE LIKE YOU?
THE CHAMBER IS OPEN, CARL...
MY... MY EYES... WHAT IS THIS UNKNOWN SENSATION?
CENTRAL HERE! WHAT'S HAPPENING, CARL? YOUR METABOLISM REVEALS ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR... COME IN, CARL.
FIN

CONQUERING ARMIES

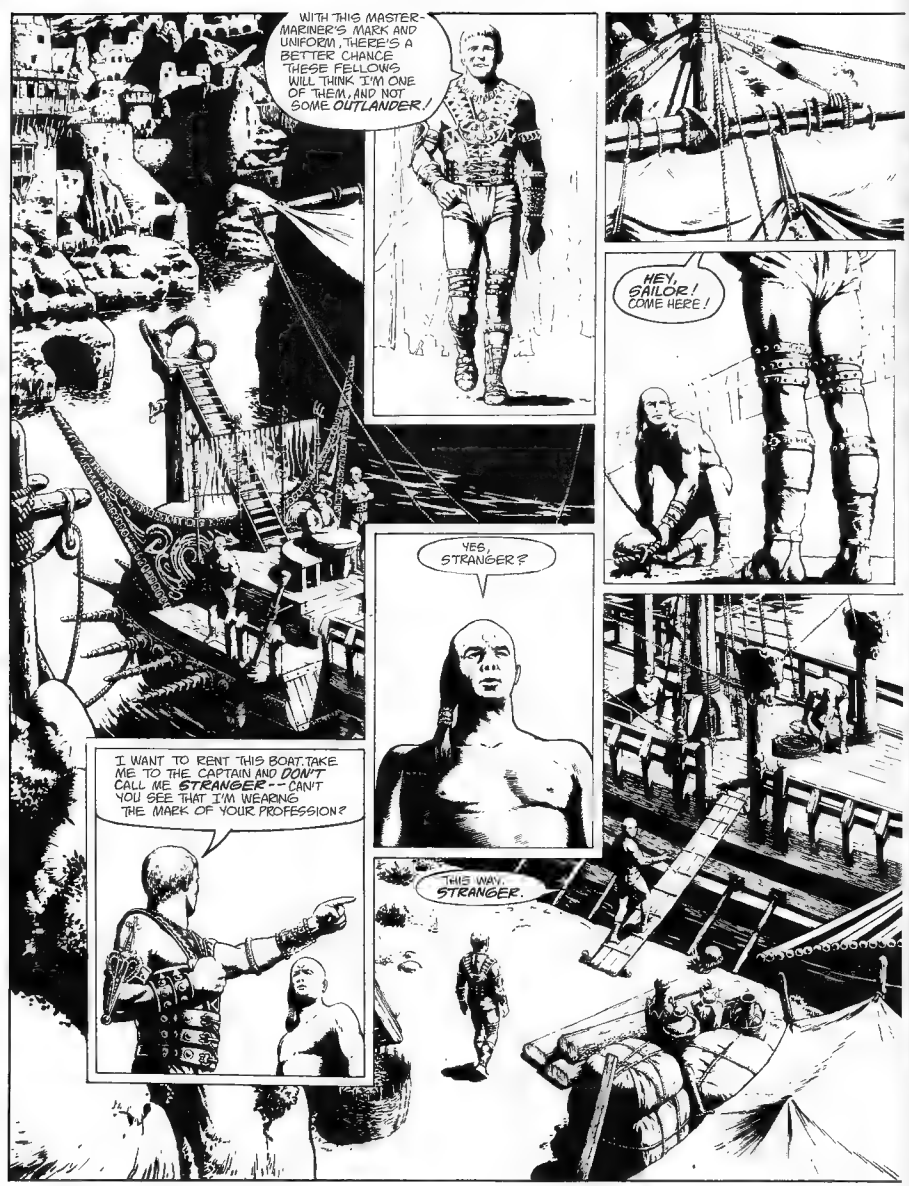
SCRIPT: JEAN-PIERRE DIONNET
ART: JEAN-CLAUDE GAL

IT CAME TO PASS THAT THE CONQUERING ARMIES REACHED THE SEA.
THEY TOOK THE FORTIFIED PENINSULA OF ACADEL. THEY OCCUPIED SARAGHO IN TWO HOURS AND THEY RAZED FAGOLA BECAUSE OF A BANTERING SONG WHICH HAD DISPLEASED THE PRINCE.
BUT THEY HAD NEVER ATTACKED LAMAS.
LAMAS, THAT IMPERISHABLE PORT CITY, WHOSE ORIGIN REMAINED UNKNOWN ..
LAMAS, WITH ITS BIZARRE MARKETS, WHERE NOW AND THEN STRANGE THINGS WERE SOLD...
LAMAS, WHOSE SCORNFUL FISHERMEN WERE PROUD TO BE THE ONLY MEN WHO DARED GO BEYOND THE HORIZON ..
THE CONQUEROR USED TO SAY THAT ONE DAY HE WOULD DOUBTLESS HAVE NEED OF THEM, AND HE WANTED TO WIN THEM OVER WITHOUT RESORTING TO FORCE.
HE SENT HIS SOLDIERS TO SPEND THEIR GOLD IN LAMAS.


LOOK, WE'RE ALMOST THERE, ALPHAN. IT'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER.
YOU'VE BEEN TELLING ME THAT FOR THE PAST HOUR, DANATIAN!
HERE, LOOK! THIS IS IT: "THE DANCING BEARS," THE MOST CONGENIAL SPOT IN LAMAS!
YES, THIS WILL BE FINE.
YOU'LL SEE, YOU'LL SEE! SHE'S REALLY...
SSHH! THERE SHE IS

WELL?
AH, YES/... SHE'S REALLY GOOD!
SHE SMILED AT ME, SHE SMILED AT ME!
YOU'RE SURE?
I TELL YOU SHE SMILED AT ME!
YOU LUCKY DOG! I KNOW HOW TO GET BACK-STAGE. AFTER THE DANCE I'LL TAKE YOU TO HER ..

CAREFUL OF THE STEPS!
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE. WITHOUT YOU I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND MY WAY THROUGH THIS MAZE!
LOOK, THERE SHE IS!
HELLO, YOU BEAUTIFUL MAN!
THERE, AS PROMISED.
YOU DIDN'T REALLY HURT HIM, DID YOU? HE REALLY IS A GOOD FRIEND...
YOU EXAGGERATE. I'M REALLY JUST...


WITH THIS MASTER-MARINER'S MARK AND UNIFORM, THERE'S A BETTER CHANCE THESE FELLOWS WILL THINK I'M ONE OF THEM, AND NOT SOME OUTLANDER!
HEY, SAILOR! COME HERE!
YES, STRANGER?
I WANT TO RENT THIS BOAT. TAKE ME TO THE CAPTAIN AND DON'T CALL ME STRANGER--CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I'M WEARING THE MARK OF YOUR PROFESSION?
THIS WAY, STRANGER.

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR TO PUT OUT TO SEA?
FOR THE WIND TO RISE, MASTER DANATIAN...
I'M SO EAGER TO BE OFF.
VERY WELL, CAPTAIN.
TO THE GALLEY! WE'LL LEAVE THE PORT BY ROWING OUT!
FASTER, YOU DOGS!

THE VOYAGE WAS LONG, THE WINDS WERE NOT VERY FAVORABLE. AND ON THE SIXTH DAY, WHILE DANATIAN WAS SLEEPING...
DREAMING OF ATTRACTIVE PROSPECTS...
BAM!
BAM!
CRACK!
SO, YOU'RE THE PASSENGER WHO COMPLAINED ABOUT OUR LAZINESS?

ME? SURELY NOT! I'VE ALWAYS BEEN DEEPLY REVOLTED BY...
HEY, STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH ME?
LOOK!

BRING HIM TO ME!
ALPHAN!
DANATTAN!.. WHAT A NICE SURPRISE!
WELL, I SURE AM GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!, YOU KNOW... I'M... I'M REALLY SORRY... I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME...
I UNDERSTAND, OLD FRIEND, AND I FORGIVE YOU, I REMEMBER THE OLD DAYS, BUT...
I'M AFRAID MY COMPANIONS AREN'T GOING TO ALLOW THEMSELVES TO FORGET YOUR REGRETTABLE DEEDS--BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU, OLD FRIEND...
AND I'LL PERSONALLY SEE TO YOUR COMFORT.

BONG
BONG
FOOD, FOR PITY'S SAKE! FOOD.. OR... AT LEAST... A LITTLE WATER...
CLACK
ALPHAN! YOU'VE COME TO FREE ME AT LAST!
ALPHAN?
YOUR FRIEND HAS COME TO PAY YOU A VISIT!

YOUR MUTINY WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED, YOU PIG, BUT THE NEW CAPTAIN DOESN'T LIKE IT VERY MUCH WHEN SOMEONE TRIES TO TREAD ON HIS TOES!

MAYBE I'M GOING TO DIE OF HUNGER, BUT NOT BEFORE YOU WAKE UP, YOU PIECE OF SHIT!

YOU'RE GOING TO SUFFER, ALPHAN!

GOOD LUCK, GUYS! I'M SURE YOU WON'T BE BORED! HA! HA! HA!

THE PORT OF LUBINA, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEA ..

LUBINA WITH ITS SLAVE MARKETS...
AND NOW, TWO MAGNIFICENT WARRIORS, A LITTLE THIN, BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT...

A COUPLE OF DAYS WORK IN THE FIELDS WILL SPRUCE THEM UP, HA, HA!
JUST REMEMBER TO KEEP THEM SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER--THEY DON'T LIKE EACH OTHER VERY MUCH...
THE BIDDING BEGINS AT TEN THOUSAND SHADES BUT YOU CAN, IN SPITE OF THE CUSTOM, OFFER LESS...
THAN TEN THOUSAND SHADES! SOLD TO THIS GENTLEMAN!

A LITTLE FASTER, WE'RE GETTING THERE!
AND DON'T START FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER AGAIN ALL THE TIME. BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, WHAT'S THE POINT OF IT? YOU COULD HAVE DONE WORSE, I ASSURE YOU!
I PROVIDE PLENTY OF FOOD FOR THOSE WHO WORK HARD, AND I DON'T BEAT ANYONE WITHOUT CAUSE...
IF YOU WORK HARD, YOU WILL EAT WELL. IF YOU REALLY WORK LIKE A HORSE...
YOU CAN EAT LIKE A HORSE, AND YOU... HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

AAAAHHHH...
ARGH...
BASTARD! TREATING US LIKE HORSES!
HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW THE STRENGTH OF A FRIENDSHIP LIKE OURS.

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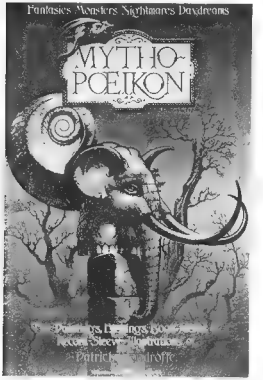

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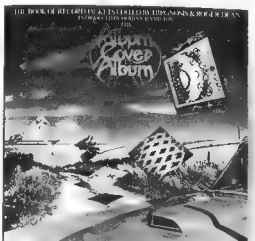

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I was busy translating one of my *Madrigals Macabre* into Martian on the morning I was found acceptable. The intercom had buzzed briefly, and I dropped my pencil and flipped on the toggle in a single motion.

"Mister G," piped Morton's youthful contralto into the speaker, "the old man says I should 'get hold of that damned conceited rhymer' right away, and send him to his cabin. Since you're the only damned conceited rhymer . . ."

"Let not ambition mock thy useful toil." I cut him off.

So, the Martians had finally made up their minds!

The entire month's anticipation tried hard to crowd itself into the moment, but could not quite make it. I was frightened to walk those forty feet and hear Emory say the words; and that feeling elbowed the other one into the background.

So I finished the stanza I was translating before I got up. It took only a moment to reach Emory's door. I knocked twice, just as he growled, "Come in."

"You wanted to see me?"

"That was fast. What did you do, run?"

Little fatty flecks beneath pale eyes, thinning hair, and an Irish nose; a voice a decibel louder than anyone else's . . .

Hamlet to Claudius: "I was working."

"Hah!" he snorted. "Come off it. No one's ever seen you do any of that stuff."

I shrugged my shoulders and started to rise.

"Sit down!" He stood up.

He walked around his desk. He hovered above me and glared down. (A hard trick, even when I'm in a low chair.)

"You are undoubtedly the most antagonistic bastard I've ever had to work with! I'm willing to admit you're smart, maybe even a genius, but—oh, hell!"

He made a heaving gesture with both hands and walked back to his chair. "Betty has finally talked them into letting you go in. Draw one of the jeepsters after lunch."

I nodded, got to my feet. My hand was on the doorknob when he said: "I don't have to tell you how important this is. Don't treat them the way you treat us."

I closed the door behind me.

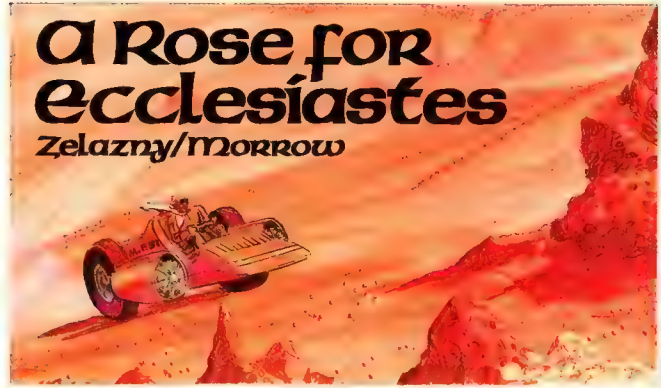
I was nervous, but I knew instinctively that I wouldn't muff it. My Boston publishers expected a Martian Idyll, or at least a Saint-Exupéry job on space flight. The National Science Association wanted a complete report on the Rise and Fall of the Martian Empire. I knew they would both be pleased.

I made my way to our car barn, drew one jeepster, and headed it toward Tirellian.

Flames of sand, lousy with iron oxide, set fire to the buggy. They swarmed over the open top and bit through my scarf; they set to work pitting my goggles.

A Rose for Ecclesiastes

Zelazny/Morrow



Suddenly I was heading uphill, and I shifted gears to accommodate the engine's braying. I reached the crest of the hill, I had raised too much dust to see what was ahead but I have a head full of maps, so I bore to the left and downhill, adjusting the throttle. I rounded a rock pagoda and arrived. Betty waved as I crunched to a halt, then jumped down.

"Hi," I choked, unwinding my scarf. Where do I go and who do I see?"

I looked at her chocolate-bar eyes and perfect teeth, at her sun-bleached hair, close-cropped to the head and decided that she was in love with me

"Mr. Gallinger, the Matriarch is waiting inside to be introduced. She has consented to open the Temple records for your study." She paused here to pat her hair. Did my gaze make her nervous?

"They are religious documents, as well as their only history," she continued, "sort of like the Mahabharata. She expects you to observe certain rituals in handling them, like repeating the sacred words when you turn pages—she will teach you the system."

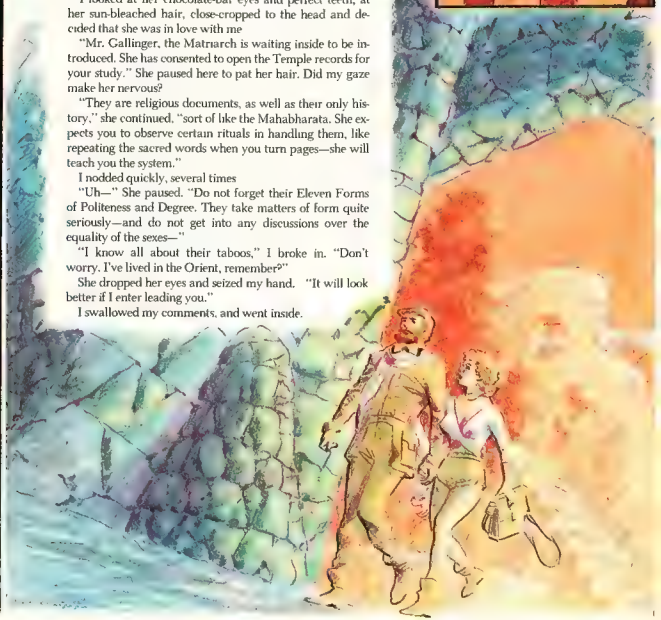
I nodded quickly, several times

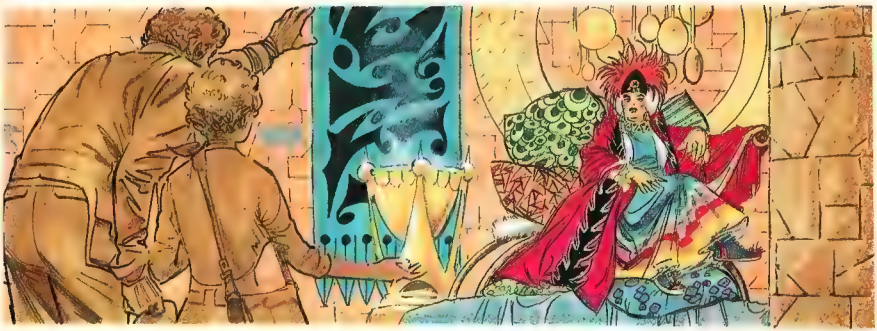
"Uh—" She paused. "Do not forget their Eleven Forms of Politeness and Degree. They take matters of form quite seriously—and do not get into any discussions over the equality of the sexes—"

"I know all about their taboos," I broke in. "Don't worry. I've lived in the Orient, remember?"

She dropped her eyes and seized my hand. "It will look better if I enter leading you."

I swallowed my comments, and went inside.





The Matriarch, M'Cwyie, was short, white-haired, fiftyish, and dressed like a Gypsy queen. Accepting my obeisances, she regarded me as an owl might a rabbit. The lids of those black eyes jumped as she discovered my perfect accent. "You are the poet?"

"Yes," I replied.

She turned to Betty. "You may go now."

Betty muttered the parting formalities, gave me a strange sidewise look, and was gone. She apparently had expected to stay and "assist" me. But I was the Schliemann at this Troy, and there would be one name on the Association report!

M'Cwyie rose. "Our records are very, very old," she began "Your word for their age is 'millennia.' "

"I'm very eager to see them."

"We will have to go into the Temple—they may not be removed."

I was wary. "You have no objections to my copying them, do you?"

"No. I see that you respect them, or your desire would not be so great."

"Excellent." She seemed amused. I asked her what was funny

"The High Tongue may not be so easy for a foreigner to learn."

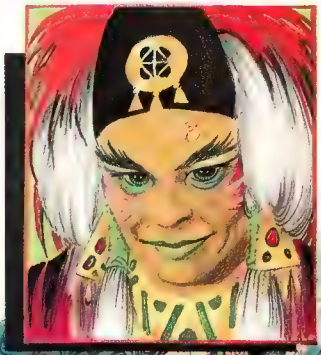
It came through fast. No one on the first expedition had gotten this close. I had had no way of knowing that this was a double-language deal—a classical as well as a vulgar. I knew some of the Prakrit, now I had to learn all their Sanskrit. "Ouch! and damn!"

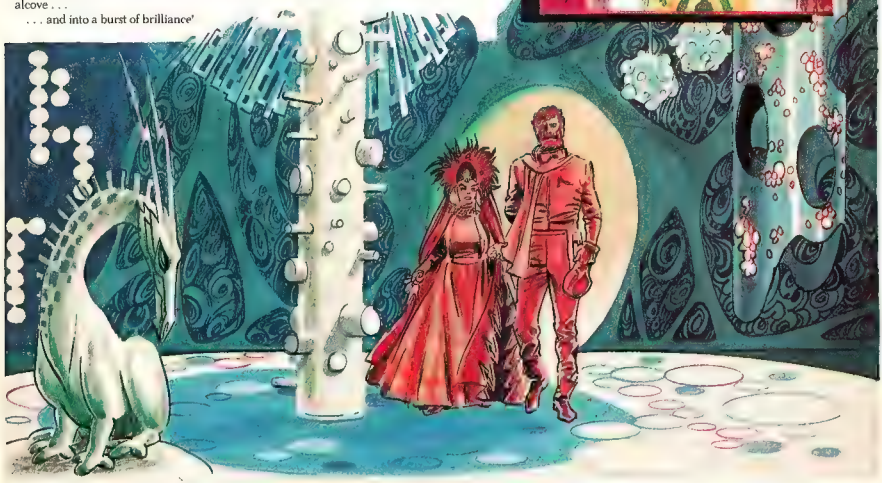
"Pardon, please?"

"It's non translatable, M'Cwyie. But imagine yourself having to learn the High Tongue in a hurry, and you can guess at the sentiment."

She seemed amused again, and told me to remove my shoes. She guided me through an alcove . . .

. . . and into a burst of brilliance!





We had had no idea this existed. Greedily, I cast my eyes about. A highly sophisticated system of esthetics lay behind the decor. We would have to revise our entire estimation of Martian culture.

I leaned forward to study a ceremonial table loaded with books.

With my toe, I traced a mosaic on the floor.

"Is your entire city within this one building?"

"Yes, it goes far back into the mountain."

"I see," I said, seeing nothing.

"Shall we begin your friendship with the High Tongue?"

I was trying to photograph the hall with my eyes, knowing I would have to get a camera in here, somehow, sooner or later.

I sat down.

For the next three weeks alphabet-bugs chased each other behind my eyelids whenever I tried to sleep. The sky was an unclouded pool of turquoise that rippled calligraphies whenever I swept my eyes across it.

M'Cwyie tutored me two hours every morning, and occasionally for another two in the evening. I spent an additional fourteen hours a day on my own. At night, the elevator of time dropped me to its bottom floors . . . .

I was six again, learning my Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Aramaic. I was ten, sneaking peeks at the *Iliad*. When Daddy wasn't spreading hellfire, brimstone, and brotherly love, he was teaching me to dig the Word, like in the original.

On the day the boy graduated from high school, with the French, German, Spanish, and Latin awards, Dad Gallinger had told his fourteen-year-old, six foot scarecrow of a son that he wanted him to enter the ministry. I remember how his son was evasive

"Sir," he had said, "I'd sort of like to study on my own for a year or so, and then take pre-theology courses at some liberal arts university. I feel I'm still sort of young to try a seminary, straight off."

"But you have the gift of tongues, my son. You were born to be a missionary. You say you are young, but time is rushing by you like a whirlwind. Start early."

I can't see his face now; I never can. Maybe it is because I was always afraid to look at it then.

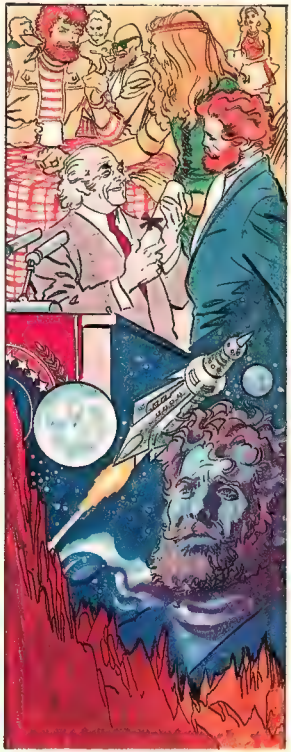
Years later, when he was dead, I looked at him and did not recognize him.

We had met nine months before my birth, this stranger and I. He had never been cruel—stern, demanding, with contempt for everyone's shortcomings—but never cruel. He had tolerated my three years at St. John's, possibly because of its name, never knowing how liberal and delightful a place it really was.

But I never knew him, the man atop the catafalque demanded nothing now; I was free not to preach the Word. But now I wanted to, in a different way.

I did not return for my senior year in the fall. I had a small inheritance coming, and a bit of trouble getting control of it, since I was still under eighteen. But I managed.

It was Greenwich Village I finally settled upon.



Not telling any well-meaning parishioners my new address, I entered into a daily routine of writing poetry and teaching myself Japanese and Hindustani. I grew a fiery beard, drank espresso, and learned to play chess.

After that, it was two years in India with the old Peace Corps—which broke me of my Buddhism, and gave me my *Pipes of Krishna* lyrics and the Pulitzer they deserved.

Then back to the States for my degree, grad work in linguistics, and more prizes.

Then one day a ship went to Mars. The vessel settling in its New Mexico nest of fires contained a new language. —It was fantastic, exotic, and esthetically overpowering. After I had learned all there was to know about it, and written my book, I was famous in new circles:

"Go, Gallinger. Dip your bucket in the well, and bring us a drink of Mars. Go, learn another world—but remain aloof, rail at it gently like Auden—and hand us its soul in iambics."

I came to the land where the sun is a tarnished penny, where the wind is a whip, where two moons play at hot rod games, and a hell of sand gives you the incendiary itches whenever you look at it.

I rose from my twistings on the bunk and crossed the darkened cabin to a port.

I had the High Tongue by the tail already –or the roots, if you want your puns anatomical, as well as correct. The High and Low Tongues were not so dissimilar as they had first seemed. I had enough of the one to get me through the murkier parts of the other. The dictionary I was constructing grew by the day, like a tulip, and would bloom shortly. Every time I played the tapes the stem lengthened.

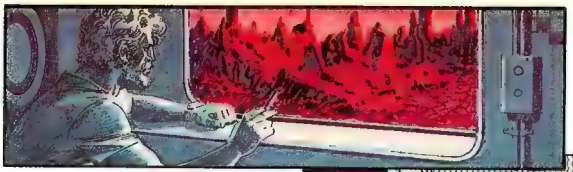
Now was the time to tax my ingenuity. I had purposely refrained from plunging into the major texts until I could do justice to them. I had been reading minor commentaries, bits of verse, fragments of history—and one thing had impressed me strongly in all that I read.

They wrote about concrete things: rock, sand, water, winds; and the tenor couched within these elemental symbols was fiercely pessimistic. It reminded me of some Buddhist texts, but even more so, I realized from my recent *recherches*, it was like parts of the Old Testament. Specifically, it reminded me of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

That, then, would be it. The sentiment, as well as the vocabulary, was so similar that it would be a perfect exercise. Like putting Poe into French. I would never be a convert to the Way of Malann, but I would show them that an Earthman had once thought the same thoughts, felt similarly.

I switched on my desk lamp.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man . . .



My progress seemed to startle M'Cwyie. She peered at me, like Sartre's Other, across the tabletop. I ran through a chapter in the Book of Locar. I didn't look up, but I could feel the tight net her eyes were working about my head, shoulders, and rabid hands. I turned another page.

They said that life had gotten underway in inorganic matter. They said that movement was its first law, its first law, and that the dance was the only legitimate reply to the inorganic . . . the dance's quality its justification,—fication . . . and love is a disease in organic matter—Inorganic matter?

I shook my head. I had almost been asleep.

"M'narra."

I stood and stretched. Her eyes outlined me greedily now. So I met them, and they dropped.

"I grow tired. I want to rest awhile. I didn't sleep much last night."

"You wish to relax, and see the explicitness of the doctrine of Locar in its fullness?"

"Pardon me?"

"You wish to see a Dance of Locar?"

"Oh." Their damned circuits of form and periphrasis here ran worse than the Korean! "Yes. Surely. Any time it's going to be done I'd be happy to watch."

"Now is the time. Sit down. Rest I will call the musicians."

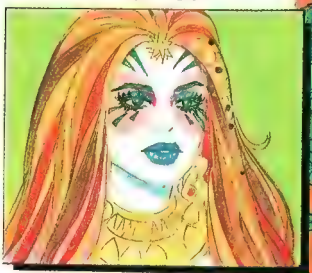
She bustled out through a door I had never been past.

Well, now, the dance was the highest art, according to Locar, not to mention Havelock Ellis, and I was about to see how their centuries-dead philosopher felt it should be conducted.

To the trio who entered with M'Cwyie I must have looked as if I were searching for the marbles I had just lost, bent over like that.

I grinned weakly and straightened up, my face red from more than exertion. I hadn't expected them *that* quickly.

Suddenly I thought of Havelock Ellis again in his area of greatest popularity. The little red-headed doll, wearing, sari-like, a diaphanous piece of the Martian sky, looked up in wonder—as a child at some colorful flag on a high pole.



"Hello," I said, or its equivalent.

"I shall dance," said the red wound in that pale, pale cameo, her face. Eyes, the color of dream and her dress, pulled away from mine.

She drifted to the center of the room.

Standing there, like a figure in an Etruscan frieze, she was either meditating or regarding the design on the floor.

Was the mosaic symbolic of something? I studied it.

The other two were paint-spattered sparrows like M'Cwyie, in their middle years

M'Cwyie disdained her stool and was seated upon the floor before I realized it. I followed suit

"What is the dancer's name?"

"Braxa," she replied, without looking at me, and raised her left hand, slowly, which meant yes, and go ahead, and let it begin.

The stringed-thing throbbed like a toothache, and a tick-tocking, like ghosts of all the clocks they had never invented, sprang from the block.

Braxa was a statue, both hands raised to her face, elbows high and outspread.

The music became a metaphor for fire.

Crackle, purr, snap . . .

She did not move.

The hissing altered to splashes. The cadence slowed. It was water now, the most precious thing in the world, gurgling clear then green over mossy rocks.

Still she did not move.

Glissandos. A pause

Then, so faint I could hardly be sure at first, the tremble of the winds began. Softly, gently, sighing and halting, uncertain. A pause, a sob, then a repetition of the first statement, only louder

Were my eyes completely bugged from my reading, or was Braxa actually trembling, all over, head to foot?

She was.

She began a microscopic swaying. A fraction of an inch right, then left. Her fingers opened like the petals of a flower, and I could see that her eyes were closed.

Her eyes opened. They were distant, glassy, looking through me and the walls. Her swaying became more pronounced, merged with the beat.

The wind was sweeping in from the desert now, falling against Tirellian like waves on a dike. Her fingers moved, they were the gusts. Her arms, slow pendulums, descended, began a counter movement.

The gale was coming now. She began an axial movement and her hands caught up with the rest of her body, only now her shoulders commenced to writhe out a figure eight.

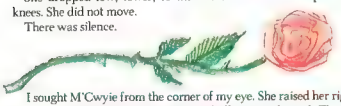
The cyclone was twisting around those eyes, its still center. Her head was thrown back, but I knew there was no ceiling between her gaze, passive as Buddha's, and the unchanging skies.

She was a spun weather vane in the air, a clothesline holding one bright garment lashed parallel to the ground. Her shoulder was bare now, and her right breast moved up and down like a moon in the sky, its red nipple appearing momently above a fold and vanishing again.

The music slowed, settled; it had been met, matched, answered. Her garment, as if alive, crept back into the more sedate folds it originally held.

She dropped low, lower, to the floor. Her head fell upon her raised knees. She did not move.

There was silence.



I sought M'Cwyie from the corner of my eye. She raised her right hand.

As if by telepathy the girl shuddered all over and stood. The musicians also rose.

There was a flurry of color and I was alone again with M'Cwyie.

"That is the one hundred-seventeenth of the two thousand, two hundred-twenty-four dances of Locar."

I looked down at her.

"Whether Locar was right or wrong, he worked out a fine reply to the inorganic."

She smiled.

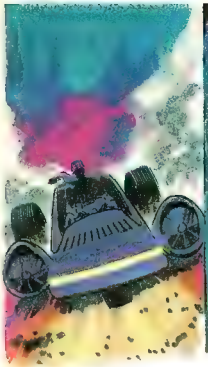
"Are the dances of your world like this?"

"Some of them are similar. I was reminded of them as I watched Braxa – but I've never seen anything exactly like hers."

"She is good," M'Cwyie said. "She knows all the dances."

A hint of her earlier expression which had troubled me . . . It was gone in an instant.

"I must tend my duties now." She moved to the table and closed the books. "M'narra."



I walked out the door, mounted the jeepster, and roared across the evening into night, my wings of risen desert flapping slowly behind me.

Hours later, after a brief grammar session back home, I heard the voices in the hall. My vent was opened a fraction, so I stood there and eavesdropped:

Morton's fruity treble: "Guess what? He said 'hello' to me awhile ago."

"Regardless of what you think of him, it's going to take me at least a year to learn what he's picked up in three weeks. And I'm just a linguist, not a poet." That was Betty.

Morton must have been nursing a crush on her bovine charms. It's the only reason I can think of for his dropping his guns to say what he did.

"I took a course in modern poetry when I was back at the university," he began. "We read six authors—Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Crane, Stevens, and Gallinger—and on the last day of the semester, when the prof was feeling a little rhetorical, he said, 'These six names are written on the century, and all the gates of criticism and hell shall not prevail against them.'

"Myself," he continued, "I thought his *Pipes of Krishna* and his *Madrigals* were great. I was honored to be chosen for an expedition he was going on, but I think he's spoken two dozen words to me since I met him."

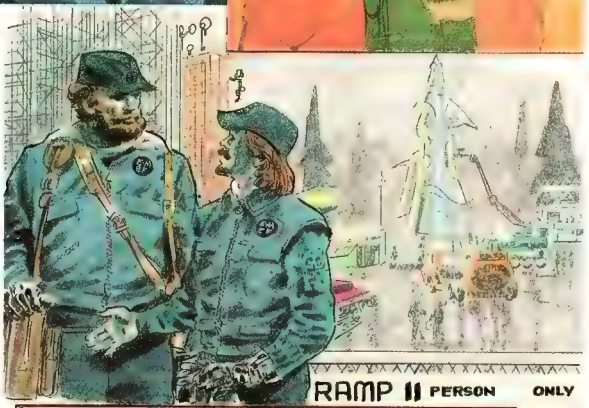
Well bless you, Morton boy. You little pimple-faced, ivy-bred connoisseur! I've never taken a course in my poetry, but I'm glad someone said that. The Gates of Hell. Well now! Maybe I am a missionary, after all!

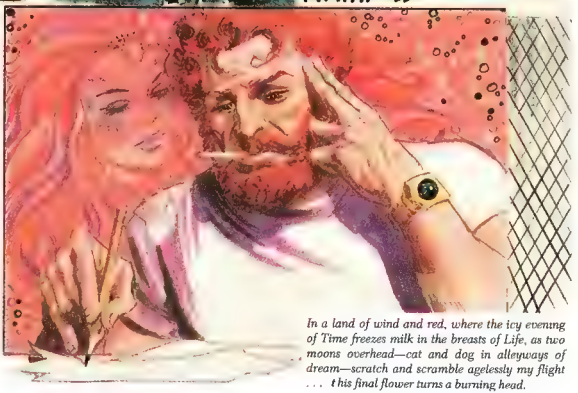
Only . . . only a missionary needs something to convert people *to*. I have my private system of esthetics, and I suppose it oozes an ethical by-product somewhere. But if I ever had anything to preach, really, even in my poems, I wouldn't care to preach it to such lowlives as you.If you think I'm a slob, I'm also a snob, and there's no room for you in my Heaven—it's a private place, where Swift, Shaw, and Petronius Arbiter come to dinner.

And oh, the feasts we have! The Trimalchio's, the Emory's we dissect!

We finish you with the soup, Morton!

I turned and settled at my desk. I wanted to write something. Ecclesiastes could take a night off. I wanted to write a poem about the one hundred-seventeenth dance of Locar; about a rose following the light, traced by the wind, sick, like Blake's rose, dying . . . . I found a pencil and began. I called it *Braxa*





In a land of wind and red, where the icy evening of Time freezes milk in the breasts of Life, as two moons overhead—cat and dog in alleyways of dream—scratch and scramble agelessly my flight . . . t his final flower turns a burning head.

When I showed my poem to M'Cwyie the next day, she read it through several times, very slowly.

"It is lovely," she said. But what is 'flower'?"

"Oh," I said. "I've never come across your word for 'flower,' but I was actually thinking of an Earth flower, the rose."

"What is it like?"

"Its petals are generally bright red. That's what I meant, on one level, by 'burning heads.' I also wanted it to imply fever, though, and red hair, and the fire of life. The rose, itself, has a thorny stem, green leaves, and a pleasing aroma."

"I wish I could see one."

"I suppose it could be arranged. I'll check."

"Do it, please. You are a –" She used the word for "prophet," or religious poet, like Isaiah or Locar. "—and your poem is inspired. I shall tell Braxa of it."

I declined the nomination, but felt flattered.

This, I decided, was the strategic day, the day on which to ask whether I might bring in the microfilm machine and the camera.

She surprised me by agreeing immediately, but she bowled me over with her invitation

"Would you like to come and stay here while you do this thing?"

"I should be honored."

"Good. Bring your machines when you want, and I will show you a room."

"Then I will go now and get things ready. Until this afternoon . . "

I anticipated a little trouble from Emory, but not much. Everyone back at the ship was anxious to see the Martians, poke needles in the Martians, ask them about Martian climate, diseases, politics, and mushrooms—and only four or five had actually gotten to see them. The crew had been spending most of its time excavating dead cities and their acropolises. I figured I would meet with little resistance, and I figured right. In fact, I got the distinct impression that everyone was happy to see me move out.

I stopped in the hydroponics room to speak with our mushroom master, one of my few friends aboard

"Hi, Kane. Grow any toadstools in the sand yet?"

He sniffed. He always sniffs. Maybe he's allergic to plants.

"Hello, Gallinger. No, I haven't had any success with the toadstools."

"Say, I came down to ask you a favor. I want a rose."

"A what?"

"A rose. You know, a nice red American Beauty job—"

"I don't think it will take in this soil. *Sniff, sniff.*"

"No, you don't understand. I don't want to plant it, I just want the flowers."

"I'd have to use the tanks." He scratched his hairless dome. "It would take at least three months, if you don't mind the wait."

"Not at all. In fact, three months will just make it before we leave." I looked about at the pools of crawling slime. "—I'm moving up to Tirellian today, but I'll be in and out all the time. I'll be here when it blooms."

II

My quarters in the Citadel of Tirellian were directly adjacent to the Temple, so I unpacked and took sixteen 35 mm. shots before starting on the books.

I took stats until I was sick of turning pages without knowing what they said. Then I started translating a work of history.

"In the thirty-seventh year of the Process of Cillen the rains came, which gave rise to rejoicing, for it was a rare and untoward occurrence, and commonly construed a blessing.

"But **what fell** was the blood of the universe, spurting from an artery and the last days were upon us. The final dance was to begin.

"The rains brought the plague that does not kill, and the last passes of Locar began with their drumming . . . ."

I asked myself what the hell Tamur meant, for he was an historian and supposedly committed to fact. This was not their Apocalypse.

Unless they could be one and the same . .?

Tirellian's handful of people were the remnant of what had obviously been a highly developed culture. They had had wars, but no holocausts; science, but little technology. A plague, a plague that did not kill . . .? Could that have done it? How, if it wasn't fatal?

I read on, but the nature of the plague was not discussed. *M'Cwyie! M'Cwyie! When I want to question you most, you are not around!*

I must have been asleep for several hours when Braxa entered my room with a tiny lamp.

"I have come," she said, "to hear the poem."

"What poem?"

"Yours."

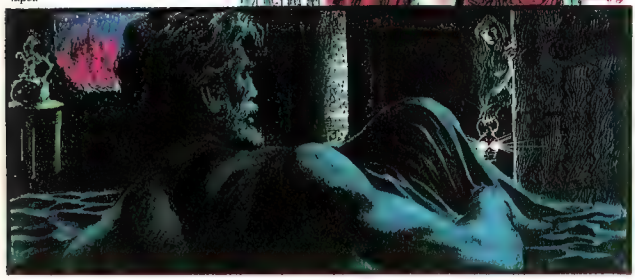
I yawned, sat up, and did things people usually do when awakened in the middle of the night to read poetry.

"That is very kind of you, but isn't the hour a trifle awkward?"

"I don't mind," she said.

Someday I am going to write an article for the *Journal of Semantics*, called "Tone of Voice: An Insufficient Vehicle for Irony." I grabbed my robe.

"What sort of animal is that?" she asked, pointing at the silk dragon on my lapel.



"Mythical," I replied. "Now look, it's late. I am tired and M'Cwyie just might get the wrong idea if she learns you were here."

"Wrong idea?"

"You know damned well what I mean!" It was the first time I had had an opportunity to use Martian profanity, and it failed

"No," she said. "I do not know."

She seemed frightened, like a puppy being scolded without knowing what it has done wrong.

I softened. "Here now, I didn't mean to upset you. On my world there are certain, uh, mores, concerning people of different sex alone together in bedrooms, and not allied by marriage . . . Um, I mean, you see what I mean?"

"No." They were jade, her eyes.

"Well, it's sort of . . . **well**, it's sex, that's what it is."

A light was switched on in those jade lamps.

"Oh, you mean having children!"

"Yes. That's it! Exactly."

She laughed. It was the first time I had heard laughter in Tirellian. It sounded like a violinist striking his high strings with the bow, in short little chops. When she had finished she moved closer.

"I remember, now," she said. "Half a Process ago, when I was a child, we had such rules. But there is no need for them now."

My mind moved like a tape recorder played at triple speed. Half a Process! No! Yes! Half a Process was two hundred-forty-three years!

—Time enough to learn the ,224 dances of Locar.

—Time enough to grow old, if you were human.

—Earth-style human, I mean.

I looked at her again, pale as the white queen in an ivory chess set. She was human, I'd stake my soul—alive, normal, healthy. I'd stake my life—woman, my body . . .

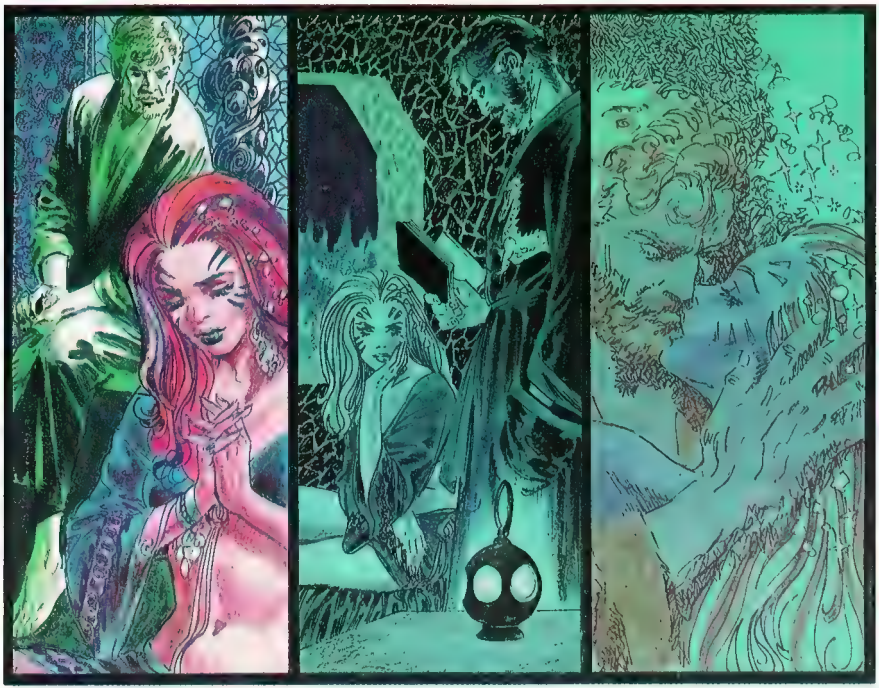
But she was two and a half centuries old, which made M'Cwyie Methuselah's grandma. It flattered me to think of their repeated complimenting of my skills.

But what did she mean "There is no such need for them now?" Why the near-hysteria? Why all those funny looks I'd been getting from M'Cwyie? I knew I was close to something important.

"Tell me," I said, in my Casual Voice, "did it have anything to do with 'the plague that does not kill,' of which Tamur wrote?"

"Yes," she replied, "the children born after the Rains could have no children of their own, and—"

"And what?" I was leaning forward, memory set at "record."



"—and the men had no desire to get any."

I sagged backward against the bedpost. Racial sterility, masculine impotence, following phenomenal weather. Had some vagabond cloud of radioactive junk from God knows where penetrated their weak atmosphere one day? Lone before Shiaparelli saw the canals, mythical as my dragon, before those "canals" had given rise to some correct guesses for all the wrong reasons, had Braxa been alive, dancing, here—damned in the womb since blind Milton had written of another paradise, equally lost?

"Tell me your poem now."

An idea hit me.

"Wait a minute," I said; "I may have something better."

I got up and rummaged through my notebooks, then I returned and sat beside her.

"These are the first three chapters of the Book of Ecclesiastes," I explained. "It is very similar to your own sacred books." I started reading.

I got through eleven verses before she cried out, "Please don't read that! Tell me one of yours!"

I stopped and tossed the notebook onto a nearby table. She was shaking, not as she had quivered that day she danced as the wind, but with the jitter of unshed tears I put my arm about her shoulders.

"He is so sad," she said, "like all the others."

So I twisted my mind like a bright ribbon, folded it, and tied the crazy Christmas knots I love so well. From German to Martian, with love, I did an impromptu paraphrasal of a poem about a Spanish dancer. I thought it would please her. I was right.

"Ooh," she said again. "Did you write that?"

"No, it's by a better man than I."

"I don't believe you. You wrote it."

"No, a man named Rilke did."

"But you brought it across to my language. Light another match, so I can see how she danced."

I did

"The fires of forever," she mused, "and she stamped them out, 'with small, firm feet ' I wish I could dance like that."

"You're better than any Gypsy," I laughed, blowing it out

"No, I'm not. I couldn't do that."

"Do you want me to dance for you?"

"No," I said. "Go to bed."

She smiled, and before I realized it, had unclasped the fold of red at her shoulder.

And everything fell away.

I swallowed, with some difficulty.

"All right," she said.

So I kissed her, as the breath of fallen cloth extinguished the lamp

III

The days were like Shelley's leaves: yellow, red, brown, whipped in bright gusts by the west wind. Almost all the books were recorded now. It would take scholars years to properly assess their value. Mars was locked in my desk.

Ecclesiastes, abandoned and returned to a dozen times, was almost ready to speak in the High Tongue. I wrote reams of poetry I would have been ashamed of before. Evenings I would walk with Braxa, across the dunes or up into the mountains. Sometimes she would dance for me; she still thought I was Rilke; and I almost kidded myself into believing it. Here I was, staying at the Castle Duino, writing his *Elegies*.

. . . It is strange to inhabit the Earth no more,
to use no longer customs scarce acquired,
nor interpret roses . . .

No! Never interpret roses! Don't. Smell them (sniff, Kane!), pick them, enjoy them. Live in the moment. Hold to it tightly.

The last days were upon us.

A day went by and I did not see Braxa, and a night. And a second. A third.

I was half-mad. I hadn't realized how close we had become, now important she had been. I had fought against questioning roses.

I had to ask. I didn't want to, but I had no choice.

"Where is she, M'Cwyie? Where is Braxa?"

"She is gone," she said.

"I must know."

She looked through me. "She has left us. Up in the hills, I suppose. Or the desert. It does not matter. The dance draws to a close. The Temple will soon be empty."

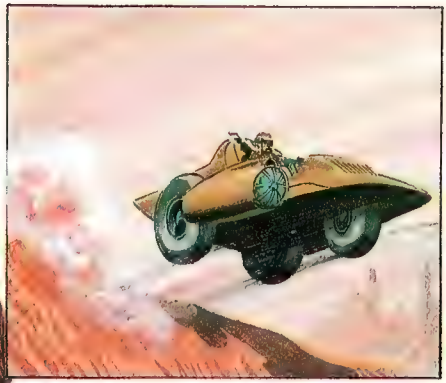
"I must see her again. We lift off in a matter of days."

"I am sorry, Callinger."

I stood up.

"I will find her."

I left the Temple. M'Cwyie was a seated statue. My boots were still where I had left them.



All day I roared up and down the dunes, going nowhere. Finally, I had to return for more fuel. Emory came stalking out.

"Okay, make it good. Why the rodeo?"

"Why, I, uh, lost something."

"In the middle of the desert?"

"It's simply that I lost my watch. My mother gave it to me and it's a family heirloom. I want to find it before we leave."

"Hmph!" he snorted. "That's a pretty strange way to look for a watch, riding up and down in a jeepster."

"I could see the light shining off it that way," I offered, lamely.

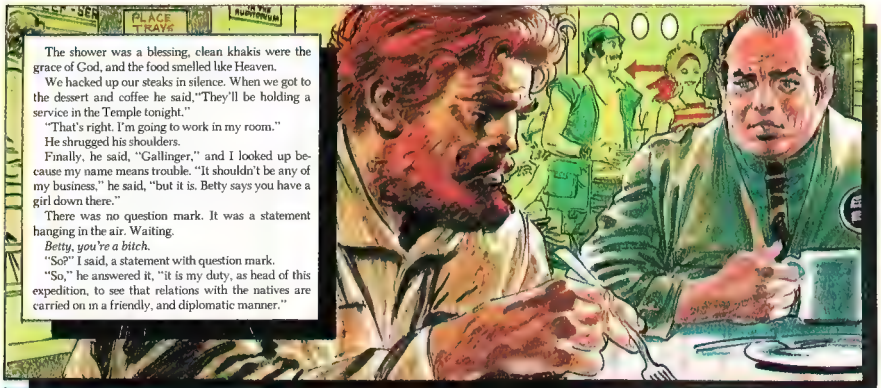
"Well, it's starting to get dark," he observed. "No sense looking any more today.

"Throw a dust sheet over the jeepster," he directed a mechanic. He patted my arm.

"Come on in and get a shower, and something to eat. You look as if you could use both."

Little fatty flecks beneath pale eyes, thinning hair, and an Irish nose, a voice a decibel louder than anyone else's . . . .

His only qualification for leadership!



The shower was a blessing, clean khakis were the grace of God, and the food smelled like Heaven.

We hacked up our steaks in silence. When we got to the dessert and coffee he said,"They'll be holding a service in the Temple tonight."

"That's right. I'm going to work in my room."

He shrugged his shoulders.

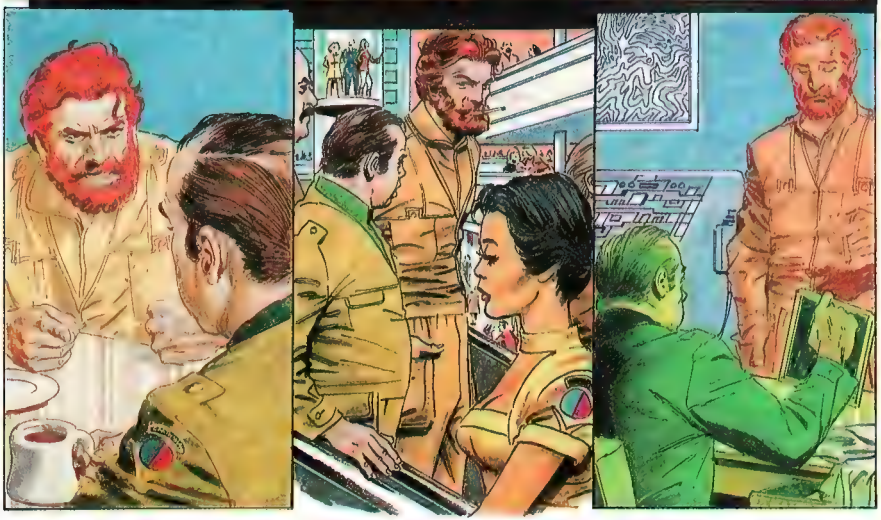
Finally, he said, "Gallinger," and I looked up because my name means trouble. "It shouldn't be any of my business," he said, "but it is. Betty says you have a girl down there."

There was no question mark. It was a statement hanging in the air. Waiting.

Betty, you're a bitch.

"So?" I said, a statement with question mark.

"So," he answered it, "it is my duty, as head of this expedition, to see that relations with the natives are carried on in a friendly, and diplomatic manner."



"You speak of them," I said, "as though they are aborigines. Nothing could be further from the truth." I rose. "When my papers are published everyone on Earth will know that truth. I'll tell the tragedy of a doomed race, waiting for death, resigned and disinterested. I'll tell why, and it will break hard, scholarly hearts. I'll write about it, and they will give me more prizes, and this time I won't want them."

"*Do* you have a girl down there?"

"Yes!" I said. Yes, *Claudius! Yes, Daddy! Yes, Emory!* "I do. But I'm going to let you in on a scholarly scoop now. They're sterile. In one more generation there won't be any Martians." I paused, then added, "Except in my papers, except on a few pieces of microfilm and tape. And in some poems, about a girl who did give a damn and could only bitch about the unfairness of it all by dancing."

"Oh," he said.

After awhile: "You *have* been behaving differently these past couple months. You've even been downright civil on occasion. I didn't know anything mattered that strongly to you."

I bowed my head

"Is she the reason you were racing around the desert?"

I nodded

"Why?"

I looked up. "Because she's out there, somewhere. I don't know where, or why. And I've got to find her before we go."

He leaned back, opened a drawer, and took out something wrapped in a towel. He unwound it. A framed photo of a woman lay on the table.

"My wife," he said.

It was an attractive face, with big, almond eyes. "I'm a Navy man, you know," he began. "Met her in Japan. She was my wife. When she died I was on the other side of the world. They took my children, and I've never seen them since. I couldn't learn what orphanage, what home, they were put into. That was long ago. Very few people know about it."

"I'm sorry," I said.

"Don't be. Forget it. But"– he shifted in his chair and looked at me—"if you do want to take her back with you—do it. It'll mean my neck, but I'm too old to ever head another expedition like this one. So go ahead."

He gulped his cold coffee.

"Get your jeepster."

I tried to say "thank you" twice, but I couldn't. So I got up and walked out.

"Here it is, Gallinger!" I heard a shout.

I turned on my heel and looked back up the ramp. "Kane!" He was limned in the port, shadow against light, but I had heard him sniff.

I returned the few steps. "Here what is?"

"Your rose."

He produced a plastic container, divided internally. The lower half was filled with liquid. In the other half, was a large, newly opened rose.

"Thank you," I said, tucking it into my jacket.

"Going back to Tirellian, eh?"

"Yes."

"I saw you come aboard, so I got it ready."

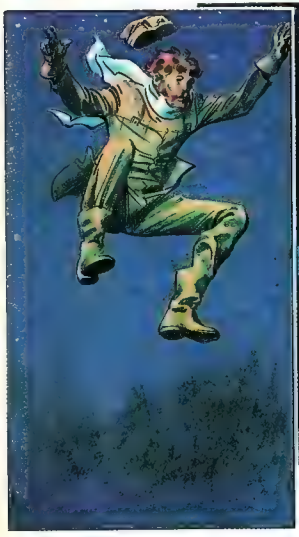
"Thanks again."

"It's chemically treated. It will stay in bloom for weeks."

I nodded. I was gone.

Up into the mountains now. Far. I spotted a green, unwinking star, and felt a lump in my throat. The encased rose beat against my chest like an extra heart. The donkey brayed, I lashed him some more and he died. I threw the emergency brake on and got out. I began to walk.

So cold, so cold it grows. Up here. At night? Why? Why did she do it? Why flee the campfire when night comes on?



I was up, down, around, and through every chasm, gorge, and pass, with my long-legged strides and an ease of movement never known on Earth. Barely two days remain, my love, and thou hast forsaken me. Why?

I crawled under overhangs. I leaped over ridges. I scraped my knees, an elbow. I heard my jacket tear.

Stones ground underfoot and I dangled over an edge. My fingers so cold. It was hard to grip the rock. I looked down.

Twelve feet or so. I let go and dropped, landed rolling. Then I heard her scream.

I lay there, not moving, looking up. Against the night, above, she called. "Gallinger!"

I lay still.

"Gallinger!" And she was gone.

I heard stones rattle and knew she was coming down some path to the right of me. I jumped up and ducked into the shadow of a boulder.

"Gallinger?"

I stepped out and seized her shoulders.

"Braxa."

She screamed again, then began to cry. It was the first time I had ever heard her cry.

"Why?" I asked. "Why?"

But she only clung to me and sobbed.

Finally, "I thought you had killed yourself."

"Maybe I would have," I said. "Why did you leave Tirellian? And me?"

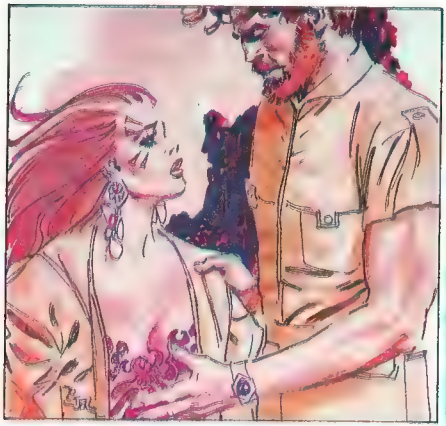
"Didn't M'Cwyie tell you? Didn't you guess?" She shook all over, then was silent for a long time. I realized suddenly that she was wearing only her flimsy dancer's costume. I pushed her from me, took off my jacket, and put it about her shoulders.

"You'll freeze to death!"

"No," she said, "I won't."

"You really do not know?" she asked.

"No!"



which was enough . . . Because I—wasn't—affected—apparently—"

"Oh," I said. "Oh." We stood there, and I thought. "Well, why did you run? What's wrong with being pregnant on Mars? Tamur was mistaken. Your people can live again."

She laughed, again that wild violin. I stopped her before it went too far.

"How?" she finally asked, rubbing her cheek.

"Your people live longer than ours. If our child is normal it will mean our races can intermarry. There must still be other fertile women of your race. Why not?"

"You have read the Book of Locar," she said, "and yet you ask me that? Death was decided, voted upon, and passed, shortly after it appeared in this form. But long before, the followers of Locar knew. They decided it long ago. 'We have done all things,' they said, 'we have seen all things, we have heard and felt all things. The dance was good. Now let it end.' "

"You can't believe that "

"What I believe does not matter," she replied. "M'Cwyie and the Mothers have decided we must die. Their very title is now a mockery, but their decisions will be upheld. There is only one prophecy left, and it is mistaken. We will die."

"No," I said.

"What, then?"

I was transferring the rose-case to my pocket.

"What is that?" she asked

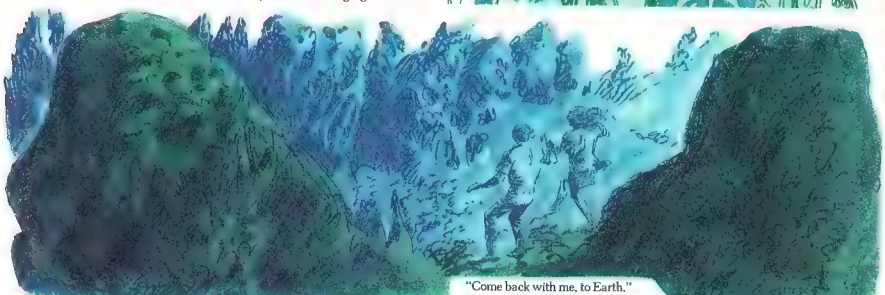
"A rose," I answered. "You can't make it out much in the dark. I once compared you to one. Remember?"

"Ye-Yes. May I carry it?"

I stuck it in the jacket pocket.

"Well? I'm still waiting for an explanation."

"When the Rains came," she said, "apparently only our men were affected,



"Come back with me, to Earth."

"No."

"All right, then. Come with me now."

"I'm going to talk to the Mothers."

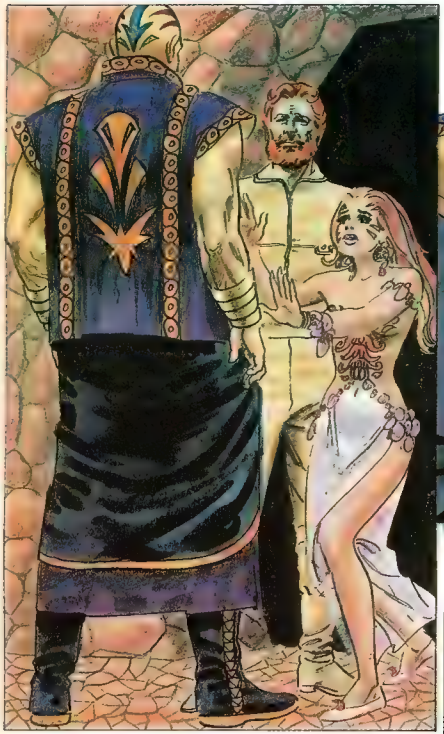
"You can't! There is a Ceremony tonight!"

"But I am going, and you are coming with me, even if I have to carry you—and I'm bigger than you are."

But you are not bigger than Ontro."

"Who the hell is Ontro?"

"He will stop you, Gallinger. He is the Fist of Malann."



"Go back," he boomed. "Go home to *your* people, Gallinger. Leave *us*!"

If they had refined their martial arts as far as they had their dances, or, worse yet, if their fighting arts were a part of the dance, I was in for trouble.

IV

I scudded the jeepster to a halt in front of the only entrance I knew, M'Cwyie's. Braxa, who had seen the rose in a headlamp, now cradled it in her lap, like our child, and said nothing.

"Are they in the Temple now?" I wanted to know.

The Madonna expression did not change. I repeated the question. She stirred. "Yes," she said, from a distance, "but you cannot go in."

I circled and helped her down.

I led her by the hand, and she moved as if in a trance. In the light of the new-risen moon, her eyes looked as they had the day I met her, when she had danced. I snapped my fingers. Nothing happened.

So I pushed the door open and led her in. The room was half-lighted.

And she screamed for the third time that evening:

"Do not harm him, Ontrol It is Gallinger!"

I had never seen a Martian man before, only women. So I had no way of knowing whether he was a freak, though I suspected it strongly.

I looked up at him.

I had thought I was the tallest man on the planet, but he was seven feet tall and overweight. Now I knew where my giant bed had come from!

"Go back," he said. "She may enter. You may not."

"I must get my books and things."

He raised a huge left arm. I followed it. All my belongings lay neatly stacked in the corner.

"I must go in. I must talk with M'Cwyie and the Mothers."

"You may not."

"The lives of your people depend on it."

"Go on in," I said to Braxa. "Give the rose to M'Cwyie. Tell her that I sent it. Tell her I'll be there shortly."

"I will do as you ask. Remember me on Earth, Gallinger. Good-bye."

"Now will you leave?" he asked. "If you like, I will tell her that we fought and you almost beat me, but I knocked you unconscious and carried you back to your ship."

"No," I said, "either I go around you or go over you, but I am going through."

He dropped into a crouch, arms extended.

"It is a sin to lay hands on a holy man," he rumbled, "but I will stop you, Gal, linger."

I looked back six years. I was a student of Oriental Languages at the University

of Tokyo. I stood in a thirty-foot circle in the Kodokan, the *judogi* lashed about my high hips by a brown belt. I was *Ik-kyu*, one notch below the lowest degree of expert. I was out of shape, I knew, but I tried hard to force my mind *tsuki no kokoro*.

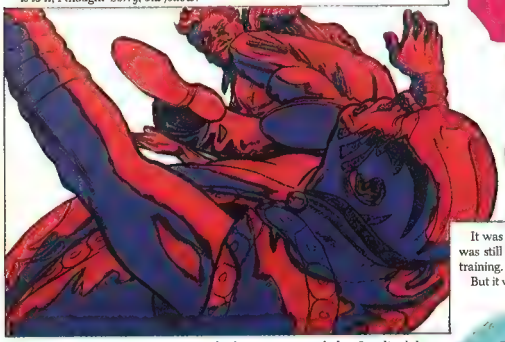
Somewhere out of the past, a voice said, "*Hajime*, let it begin."

I snapped into my *neko-ashi-dachi* cat-stance, and his eyes burned strangely. He hurried to correct his own position—and I threw it at him!

My one trick!

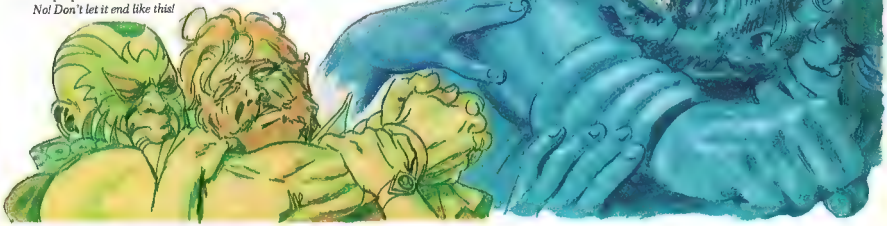
My long leg lashed up like a broken spring. Seven feet off the ground my foot connected with his jaw as he tried to leap backward.

His head snapped back and he fell. A soft moan escaped his lips. *That's all there is to it*, I thought. *Sorry, old fellow.*



But he found my throat and slipped a forearm across it before I realized there was a purpose to his action.

No! Don't let it end like this!



And as I stepped over him, somehow, groggily, he tripped me, and I fell across his body. I couldn't believe he had strength enough to remain conscious after that blow, let alone move. I didn't want to punish him any more.

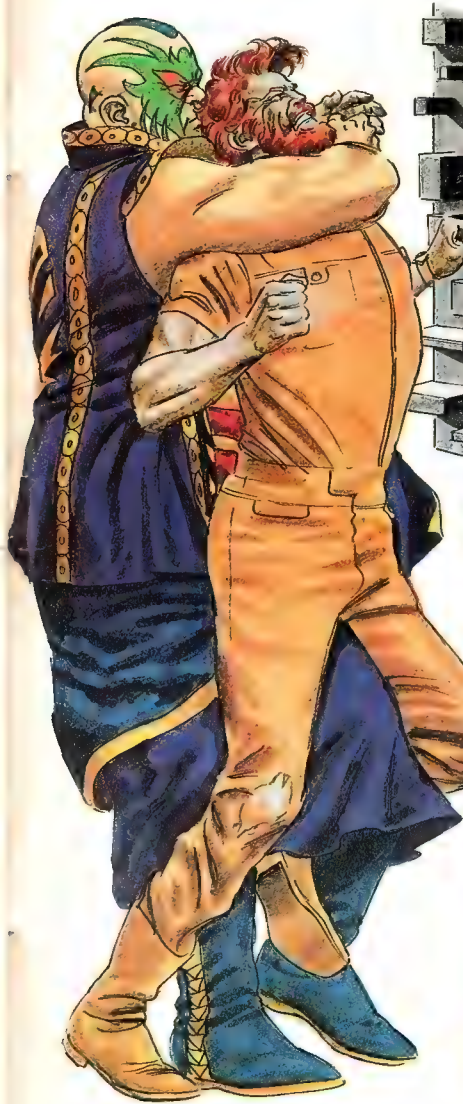
It was a bar of steel across my windpipe, my carotids. Then I realized that he was still unconscious, and that this was a reflex instilled by countless years of training. I had seen it happen once, in *shiai*.

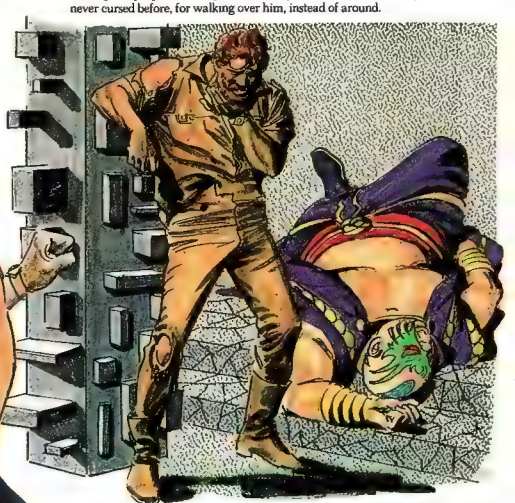
But it was rare, so very rare!

I jammed my elbows into his ribs and threw my head back in his face. The grip eased, but not enough. I didn't want to do it, but I reached up and broke his little finger.

The arm went loose and I twisted free.

He lay there panting, face contorted. My heart went out to the fallen giant, defending his people, his religion, following his orders. I cursed myself as I had never cursed before, for walking over him, instead of around.





I couldn't go into the Temple until I got my breath back, until I thought of something to say.

How do you talk a race out of killing itself?

Suddenly—

—Could it happen? Would it work that way? If I read them the Book of Ecclesiastes—if I read them a greater piece of literature than any Locar ever wrote—and as somber—and as pessimistic—and showed them that our race had gone on despite one man's condemning all of life in the highest poetry—showed them that the vanity he had mocked had borne us to the Heavens—would they believe it—would they change their minds?

There was silence all about me.

M'Cwyie had been reading Locar, the rose set at her right hand, target of all eyes.

Until I entered.

Hundreds of people were seated on the floor, barefoot. The few men were as small as the women, I noted.

I had my boots on.

Go all the way, I figured. *You either lose or you win—everything!*

A dozen crones sat in a semicircle behind M'Cwyie. The Mothers.

The barren earth, the dry wombs, the fire-touched.

I moved to the table.

"Dying yourselves, you would condemn your people," I addressed them, "that they may not know the life you have known—the joys, the sorrows, the fullness. —But it is not true that you all must die." I addressed the multitude now. "Those who say this lie. Braxa knows, for she will bear a child—"

They sat there, like rows of Buddhas. M'Cwyie drew back into the semicircle.

"—my child!" I continued, wondering what my father would have thought of this sermon.

". . . And all the women young enough may bear children. It is only your men who are sterile — and if you permit the doctors of the next expedition to examine you, perhaps even the men may be helped. But if they cannot, you can mate with men of Earth.

"And ours is not an insignificant people, an insignificant place," I went on. "Thousands of years ago, the Locar of our world wrote a book saying that it was. He spoke as Locar did, but we did not lie down, despite plagues, wars, and famines. We did not die. One by one we beat down the diseases, we fed the hungry, we fought the wars, and, recently, have gone a long time without them. We may finally have conquered them. I do not know.

"But we have crossed millions of miles of nothingness. We have visited another world. And our Locar had said, 'Why bother? What is the worth of it? It is all vanity, anyhow.'

"And the secret is," I lowered my voice, as at a poetry reading, "he was right! It *is* vanity! it *is* pride!"

I was working up a sweat. I paused dizzily.

"Here is the Book of Ecclesiastes," I announced, and began:

" 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man . . .' "

I spotted Braxa in the back, mute, rapt.

I wondered what she was thinking.

And I wound the hours of night about me, like black thread on a spool.

Oh, it was late! I had spoken till day came, and still I spoke. I finished Ecclesiastes and continued Gallinger.

And when I finished there was still only a silence.

The Buddhas, all in a row, had not stirred through the night. And after a long while M'Cwyie raised her right hand. One by one the Mothers did the same.

I knew what that meant. It meant no, do not, cease, and stop. It meant that I had failed. I walked slowly from the room and slumped beside my baggage. Ontro was gone.

After a thousand years M'Cwyie entered.

She said, "Your job is finished."

I did not move.

"The prophecy is fulfilled," she said. "My people are rejoicing. You have won, holy man. Now leave us quickly."

"I'm not a holy man," I said, "just a second-rate poet with a bad case of hubris."

I lit my last cigarette.

Finally, "All right, what prophecy?"

"The Promise of Locar," she replied, as though the explaining were unnecessary, "that a holy man would come from the Heavens to save us in our last hours, if all the dances of Locar were completed. He would defeat the Fist and bring us life."

"How?"

"As with Braxa, and as the example in the Temple."

"Example?"

"You read us his words, as great as Locar's. You read to us how there is 'nothing new under the sun.' And you mocked his words as you read them —showing us a new thing.

"There has never been a flower on Mars," she said, "but we will learn to grow them.

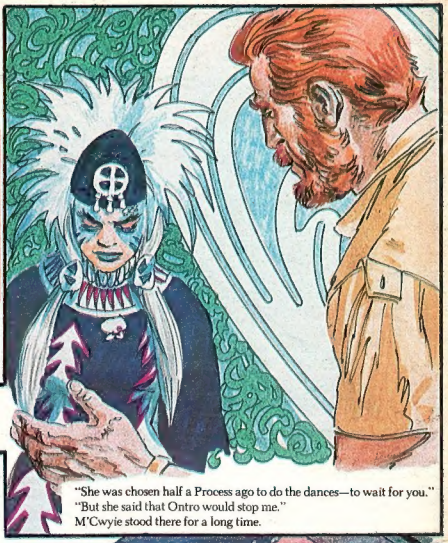
"You are the Sacred Scoffer," she finished. "He-Who-Must-Mock-in-the-Temple—you go shod on holy ground."

"But you voted 'no,' " I said.

"I voted not to carry out our original plan, and to let Braxa's child live instead."

"Oh." The cigarette fell from my fingers. How close it had been! How little I had known!

"And Braxa?"



"She was chosen half a Process ago to do the dances—to wait for you."

"But she said that Ontro would stop me."

M'Cwyie stood there for a long time.

"She had never believed the prophecy herself. Things are not well with her now. She ran away, fearing it was true. When you completed it and we voted, she knew."

"Then she does not love me? Never did?"

"I am sorry, Gallinger. It was the one part of her duty she never managed."

"Duty," I said flatly. . . . Dutydutyduty! Tra-la!

"She has said good-bye; she does not wish to see you again.

". . . and we will never forget your teachings," she added.

"Don't," I said, automatically, suddenly knowing the great paradox which lies at the heart of all miracles. I did not believe a word of my own gospel.

I stood, like a drunken man, and muttered "M'narra."

I went outside, into my last day on Mars.

I left the jeepster there and walked back to the *Aspic*, leaving the burden of life so many footsteps behind me. I went to my cabin, locked the door, and took forty-four sleeping pills.

But when I awakened I was in the dispensary, and alive.

I felt the throb of engines as I slowly stood up and somehow made it to the port.

Blurred Mars hung like a swollen belly above me, until it dissolved, brimmed over, and streamed down my face.

BOB ROLL